

Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN  
SCIENZE POLITICHE E SOCIALI

Ciclo 34

**Settore Concorsuale:** 14/A2 - SCIENZA POLITICA

**Settore Scientifico Disciplinare:** SPS/04 - SCIENZA POLITICA

POPULISM AS A BATTLEFIELD POPULIST ACTORS AND THEIR  
REPRESENTATION ON SOCIAL AND LEGACY MEDIA DURING THE  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS 2019 IN FINLAND, ITALY AND THE  
NETHERLANDS

**Presentata da:** Yannick Duncan Olavi Lahti

**Coordinatore Dottorato**

Daniela Giannetti

**Supervisore**

Augusto Valeriani

**Co-supervisore**

Daniela Giannetti

**Esame finale anno 2022**

*To my sons,*

*Luca Olavi and Davide Sauli.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Augusto Valeriani and Professor Daniela Giannetti from the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the University of Bologna. I am also thankful to the University of Bologna for providing me with the opportunity to conduct my PhD research at this great and old European institution.

I would also like to acknowledge Professor Emeritus Erkki Vainikkala from the University of Jyväskylä, Finland and Professor Emilia Palonen from the University of Helsinki, Finland – their contribution and encouragement have been essential in the early stages of my doctoral path.

Throughout this journey, I have also received on-going and extensive support from my mother, Doctor Carine Cools-Lahti to whom I will be forever grateful. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to my friend Mohamed Shimer for brainstorming and giving a shape to my idea of populism. I want to thank all my friends and family members who have been there for me here in Italy and all around the world; in particular, my father's *kyllä se siitä*-attitude helped me during these years. A special thanks also goes to Cristina and Genesio whose anecdotes and endless supply of espresso proved to be absolutely necessary. Lastly, this thesis would have never been possible without the infinite patience, guidance and, at times, wit of Gaia, my loving partner.

## **ABSTRACT**

The objective of the present research is to describe and explain populist actors and populism as a concept and their representation on social and legacy media during the European parliament elections 2019, in Finland, Italy and The Netherlands. This research tackles the topic of European populism in the context of political communication and its relation to both the legacy and digital media within the hybrid media system.

Departing from the consideration that populism and populist rhetoric are challenging concepts to define - especially in relation to different media environments, I suggest that they should be addressed and analyzed through the usage of a combination of methods and theoretical perspectives, namely Communication Studies, Corpus Linguistics, Political theory, Rhetoric and Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies. In terms of the rationale behind the mixed methodology of this research, it was essential to consider the role of the hybrid media system concerning the mass media in today's globalized world. Social and legacy media follow different logics but they are part of the hybrid media system characterizing contemporary democracies (Chadwick 2013).

Indeed, this thesis considers data of different provenance. On the one hand, for the Legacy media part, newspapers articles were collected in the three countries under study from the 1<sup>st</sup> until the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2019. Each country's legacy system is represented by three different quality papers and the articles were collected according to a selection of keywords (European Union Elections and Populism in each of the three languages). On the other hand, the Digital media data takes into consideration Twitter tweets collected during the same timeframe based on particular country-specific hashtags and tweets by identified populist actors.

In order to meet the objective of this study, three research questions are posed and the analysis leading to the results are exhaustively presented and further discussed. The results of this research provide valuable and novel insights on how populism as a theme and a concept is being portrayed in the

context of the European elections both in legacy and digital media and political communication in general.

Keywords: populism; populist rhetoric; populist discourse; populist radical right; media; digital media; legacy media; political communication.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	8
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	14
<b>POPULISM</b> .....	14
1.1. <i>Understanding populism: History and definitions</i> .....	14
1.1.1. <i>Populism and Nationalism</i> .....	22
1.2 <i>Populism as an ideology</i> .....	25
1.2.1 <i>Ernesto Laclau – views on the emptiness of populism</i> .....	32
1.3 <i>Political rhetoric and populism</i> .....	38
1.3.1 <i>Political rhetoric</i> .....	38
1.3.2 <i>Campaign rhetoric</i> .....	41
1.3.3 <i>Populism as a style: A form of rhetoric and communication</i> .....	42
1.3.4 <i>Political style: What is it?</i> .....	46
1.3.5 <i>Political style in populism by Moffit</i> .....	49
1.3.6 <i>Populist communication and its strategies</i> .....	52
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	57
<b>MEDIA AND POPULISM</b> .....	57
2.1. <i>The Mediatization of politics, populism and social media</i> .....	57
2.2. <i>Media populism</i> .....	65
2.3. <i>Populism within the social media and the hybrid media system</i> .....	70
2.3.1. <i>The logic of social media and populism, and a look at Twitter</i> .....	74
2.3.2 <i>Twitter</i> .....	76
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> .....	80
3.1. <i>Objective</i> .....	80
3.1.1. <i>Research questions</i> .....	80
3.2 <i>The data and methodology</i> .....	85
3.2.1. <i>The WhiKnow-project - Whirl Of Knowledge: Cultural Populism and Polarization in Europe</i> .....	90
3.2.2. <i>Discourse Analysis</i> .....	91
3.2.3. <i>Corpus Linguistics</i> .....	95
3.2.4. <i>Phraseology</i> .....	98
3.2.5. <i>Collocation</i> .....	98
3.2.6. <i>Discourse prosody</i> .....	101
3.2.7. <i>Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)</i> .....	102
3.3. <i>Method and process of analysis</i> .....	104
3.3.1. <i>Research question 1</i> .....	105
3.3.2. <i>Research question 2</i> .....	108
3.3.3. <i>Research question 3</i> .....	109
3.4. <i>Hypotheses</i> .....	110
<b>CHAPTER 4</b> .....	112
4.1. <i>Legacy Media: Finland</i> .....	112
4.1.1. <i>Collocational analysis</i> .....	116
4.1.2. <i>Discourse prosody – Populist anxiety</i> .....	118
4.2. <i>Twitter: Finland</i> .....	128

4.2.1. Collocational analysis -Twitter .....	132
4.2.2 Discourse prosody – Twitter “The European Union cannot become the playfield of populists” .....	133
4.3. Legacy Media: Italy .....	141
4.3.1. Collocational analysis: Italian Legacy Media.....	143
4.3.2. Discourse prosody – Populismo (col Rolex).....	145
4.4. Twitter: Italy .....	151
4.4.1. Collocational analysis -Twitter .....	153
4.4.2. Discourse prosody – Twitter.....	154
4.5. Legacy Media: The Netherlands.....	158
4.5.1. Collocational analysis: Legacy Media – The Netherlands.....	163
4.5.2. Discourse prosody Legacy Media: The Netherlands “A Monastery of Populism” .....	164
4.6. Twitter: The Netherlands .....	169
4.6.1. Collocational analysis: The Netherlands Twitter data.....	171
4.6.2. Discourse prosody: Twitter - The Netherlands .....	172
4.7. Populist actors on Twitter.....	175
4.7.1. Populist actors - Finland .....	176
4.7.2. Populist actors - Italy .....	177
4.7.3. Populist actors - The Netherlands .....	179
4.7.4. Salvini on Twitter.....	180
<b>CHAPTER 5</b> .....	183
5.1. Research question 1 .....	183
5.1.1 Research question 1 - Finland .....	183
5.1.2. Research question 1 - Italy .....	191
5.1.3. Research question 1 - The Netherlands .....	199
5.2. Research question 2 .....	204
5.2.1. Populist actors - Finland .....	204
5.2.2. Populist actors – Italy.....	209
5.2.3. Populist actors – The Netherlands.....	214
5.2.4. Salvini on Twitter.....	217
5.2.5. Concluding remarks on populist actors on Twitter .....	221
5.3. Research question 3 .....	222
<b>CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH</b> .....	225
<b>References</b> .....	233

## INTRODUCTION

This research tackles the topic of European populism in the context of political communication and its relation to both the Legacy and Digital media within the hybrid media system.

As far back as 2004, Mudde argued in his famous paper “The Populist Zeitgeist” that we are living in an age of populism. More recently Mouffe (2018) claimed that the world is going through a series of populist movements whereas Pauwels and Rooduijn (2015) stated that populism is on the rise. Singh (2021) has gone as far as arguing that the global ascendance of leaders who from their part fuse populist anti-elite rhetoric with nationalist appeals, is one of the most important developments of our times.

According to Müller (2016), Kimball (2017), Eatwell and Goodwin (2018) and Herkman (2019), the year 2016 marked a turning point in the history of populism. Indeed, after both the unexpected political victories of the Brexit campaign in the UK and the presidential campaign of Donald Trump in the US, the word *populism* became an unavoidable topic that hit the news on a daily basis. Anselmi (2017) labelled 2016 “the year of Populism” and rather accordingly the Cambridge Dictionary chose *Populism* as their word of the year in 2017.

The definition of populism as a concept, however, is not clear cut since it has changed its meaning over years as politics and political culture have evolved. The word itself has been referred to as “slippery” (Taggart, 2000), “spectral” (Ionescu and Gellner, 1969) and “sexy” (Rooduijn, 2018). Müller (2016), however, states that populism is in fact one of the most misused terms of our time. In light of this unclear definition, the present work tries to identify and describe the concept of populism by looking at it under a cross-cultural and -lingual lens.



Given the nature and forms of populism, it is understandable how many scholars have underscored the challenge of presenting an ultimate definition of populism, even if it is hardly an unfamiliar concept among political scientists (Canovan 1999; Priester 2011; Wirth et al. 2016). As a comprehensive and all-encompassing theory of populism does not exist, various serious attempts have been made in order to define this undeniably indistinct concept and this thesis feeds into that research trajectory.

Populism has thus been described and referred to with miscellaneous terms: a political strategical approach (Weyland 2001), a political logic and a process (Laclau 2005), an ideology (Mac Rae 1969), an empty ideology (Mudde 2004; Fieschi 2004; March 2007; Stanley 2008; Ucen 2010), a dimension of political culture (Worsley 1969), the enemy of democracy (Pappas 2016; Rosanvallon 2008), a style of communication (Ernst 2017), a political style (Moffit 2017) and even as a discursive frame (Aslanidis 2016). Some scholars emphasize different elements such as anti-establishment, anti-elite, and division (Rosanvallon, 2006; Müller, 2016). For some it means the crisis of democratic representation, and for others it signifies an empty ideology (Laclau, 2005; Taguieff, 2015). Wiles (1969, 166-169) has gone as far as calling populism rather as a symptom than a doctrine in his famous work from the late sixties.

Moreover, there is a widespread concern among western society that the institution of democracy is being threatened by populists with far-right and nationalistic tendencies. As a matter of fact, today many of the most famous global research institutes which examine and follow the development of democracies in the world – such as the American Freedom House and the British Economist Intelligence Unit (EUI) – have provided results which clearly indicate that the stagnation of global democracies is in fact true.

Even as the decline of democracies is globally not directly related to populism, many modern-day political scholars recognize a fundamental connection between these two factors. Rosanvallon sees that the rise of modern-day populism can partly be associated with the crisis of democratic representation, which itself is an indication of the fact that the society of today

is more difficult to comprehend, since the old class structures are vanishing and the so-called traditional parties are unable to express current issues in meaningful ways (Rosanvallon 2006, 211).

On the other hand, Müller (2016, 76) suggests that the attractiveness of populism lies in the promises of democracy which have not been fulfilled as the crucial promise of populism instead is that the people – not the elite – can rule. Thus, it is clear that researchers use many different labels to describe the ideational core of the concept of populism, in addition to those mentioned above, also as an ideology (Mudde 2004) and a political discourse (Hawkins 2003). Nevertheless, as Rooduijn (2014) points out there is, after all, a common denominator that unites these various definitions of populism. This common core is to be found in a minimal set of components that characterize the phenomenon under study: anti-elite, pro-people, the homogeneity of the people, as well as the cultivation of a permanent crisis.

In this research, the objective is to describe and explain populist actors and populism as a concept, and their representation in Legacy and Digital media during the European parliament elections of 2019 in three European countries: Finland, Italy and The Netherlands. I will investigate how populism as a concept and populists as active actors emerge from legacy media and twitter tweets during a timeframe of one month in 2019 (May, election month). In addition, I will also focus on how populist actors themselves communicate on Digital Media platforms (Twitter). As any research effort trying to observe an unfolding phenomenon, this as well has to be regarded only as a tentative attempt to approach populist discourse in a cross-cultural and cross-lingual context, within the specific framework of the EU elections.

The approach employed in this thesis consists of mixed methodologies and theories. In particular, I will draw from several theoretical disciplines such as Communication Studies, Political Theory and Rhetoric to land then on a methodological approach that includes Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics eventually leading the framework of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies. In terms of the rationale behind the mixed methodology of this research, it was essential to consider the role of the hybrid media system

concerning mass media in today's globalized world. Legacy and Digital media follow different logics but they are part of the same hybrid media system characterizing contemporary democracies (Chadwick 2013).

The analysis conducted in this research will provide valuable and novel results on how populism as a theme and a concept is being portrayed in the context of the European elections of 2019 both in legacy and digital media, but also in general: keeping future elections and populism in the lens of concentration. In addition, the results will provide us with new insights on populism in relation to political communication and the media which is why this thesis presents a simple structure consisting of six different chapters, each with their own topic-based subchapters.

Moving on now to the content of each Chapter composing this work, in Chapter 1 I will firstly present a short history of populism and will move forward to consider how populism is generally understood. Following this historical introduction, I will introduce the theoretical framework of this study, present the main concepts related to populism as a phenomenon. Alongside these theoretical inputs, I will focus on both modern as well as traditional approaches to populism and discuss with greater detail the schools of thought most relevant to this study.

Moreover, for the purposes of this particular research a greater emphasis will be given to populism as an ideology and a special focus on Laclau's views on the emptiness of populism and finally to the rhetorical and communicational characteristics of it.

Following the abovementioned theories and approaches, the most relevant and recent literature on populism will be covered and an overview on its major definitions shall be introduced.

In Chapter 2, the relationship between populism and the media will be presented and discussed moving on further to explore the different and partly complimentary aspects of populist and media logic. After this, I will look at social media and populism from the point of view of the hybrid media system.

Chapter 3 presents the design of the study and structures along the three research questions which have been posed in order to achieve the objective of

the research. After presenting said research question, a closer look to the collected data and its rationale will be discussed. Indeed, this thesis considers data of different provenance. On the one hand, for the Legacy media part, newspapers articles were collected in the three countries under study from the 1<sup>st</sup> until the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2019. Each country's legacy system is represented by three different quality papers and the articles were collected according to a selection of keywords (European Union Elections and Populism in each of the three languages). On the other hand, the Digital media data takes into consideration Twitter tweets collected during the same timeframe based on particular country-specific hashtags and tweets by identified populist actors.

After this section the two theoretical methodological frameworks – Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics – will be presented and the two essential concepts of analysis in the field of phraseology: collocation and discourse prosody shall be exhibited. After these starting points and definitions, the theoretical methodological framework of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies will be introduced in light of the methodological needs of the present study. Indeed, this researcher consists of a corpus-based discourse study which pinpoints the various theoretical starting points, methods, and concepts presented above in order to draw valuable results and considerations. At the very end of this chapter, the hypotheses of this research are presented.

Once the theoretical and methodological framework of this study is established, Chapter 4 finally presents the analyses and results emerging from the datasets. As mentioned above, the datasets were explored according to Corpus Linguistics methods using two software, MAXQDA and AntConc, in order to extract frequency lists, collocates and concordance lines. In general, the process of data extraction followed these steps: frequency lists, isolation of relevant populism-related words, collocational analysis of selected terms and concordance analysis of such terms in order to enlarge the context of reference.

The results reported in Chapter 4 will then be considered in Chapter 5 that will provide a deep, transparent and exhaustive discussion. There, space will be devoted to each country results in terms of both populism as mediatic concept and populist actors playing in their respective national arenas. Following the

data of each country's most relevant (data-wise) populist actor, a special focus will be devoted to them and their online behaviours.

In the final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 6, the ultimate conclusions of the whole research will be drawn and I will also introduce ideas and suggestions for further research. In particular, in the final part of Chapter 6 I introduce a heuristic model and formula of populism with its visualization. This will be regarded as tool to understand and define populism providing a visual model based on the exhaustive academic literature on populism.

## CHAPTER 1

### POPULISM

In this chapter I will introduce the theoretical framework of this study, present the main concepts and modern approaches to populism and discuss with greater detail the schools of thought most relevant to this study. First, I will briefly explore the recent literature on populism and introduce its major definitions. After this, I will present a short history of populism and will move forward to consider how populism is generally understood. At the end of this first subchapter, there will be a table presenting the major schools of thought in the research of populism. For the purposes of this research, a greater emphasis will be given to populism as an ideology, Ernesto Laclau's views on the emptiness of populism and finally to the rhetorical and communicational characteristics of populism.

#### *1.1. Understanding populism: History and definitions*

The definition of populism is not unambiguous since it has changed its meaning over the years as politics and political culture has evolved. Nevertheless, populism has rapidly become one of the most controversial and quoted concepts of our time. Mudde (2004) noted in his famous paper "The Populist Zeitgeist" that we are living in an age of populism, whereas Mouffe (2018) claimed that the world is going through a series of populist movements. According to Müller (2016), Kimball (2017), Eatwell & Goodwin (2018) and Herkman (2019), the year 2016 marked a turning point as after both the unexpected political victories of the Brexit campaign in the UK and the presidential campaign of Donald Trump in the US, the word *populism* became practically unavoidable. Anselmi (2018) called that year "The year of

Populism” and indeed even the Cambridge Dictionary chose *Populism* as their word of the year in 2017. The word itself has been called slippery (Taggart, 2000), spectral (Ionescu & Gellner, 1969) and sexy (Rooduijn, 2018). In addition, Müller (2016) states that populism is in fact one of the most misused terms of our time.

It is perhaps not surprising that several scholars underline the challenge of defining populism, which is by no means an unfamiliar concept among political scientists (Canovan 1999; Priester 2011; Wirth et al. 2016). Moreover, the general lack of consensus concerning the use of populism as a term of an analytical category has been extensively debated (Decker 2006; Dubiel 1986; Rensmann 2006). Regardless of this, it can be said that populism is seen widely as an analytical concept.

As an exhaustive and comprehensive theory of populism does not exist, various serious attempts have been made in order to define this indefinitely vague concept. Populism has thus been described with manifold and diverse terms. It has been defined as a political strategical approach (Weyland 2001), a political logic and a process (Laclau 2005), an ideology (Mac Rae 1969), an empty ideology (Mudde 2004; Fieschi 2004; March 2007; Stanley 2008; Ucen 2010), a dimension of political culture (Worsley 1969), the enemy of democracy (Pappas 2016; Rosanvallon 2008), a style of communication (Ernst 2017), a political style (Moffit 2017) and even as a discursive frame (Aslanidis 2016). Peter Wiles (1969, 166-169) has gone as far as calling populism rather as a symptom than a doctrine in his famous work from the late sixties.

According to the *Oxford Handbook of Populism* (2017) three main approaches have shaped the most recent debate on populism: 1) the ideational approach theorized by Cas Mudde, 2) the political strategic approach by Kurt Weyland and, 3) the socio cultural approach by Pierre Ostiguy. Partly in parallel - in the views of Palonen and Saresma (2017, 15) - some members of the scientific community and scholars of populism in political sciences in more particular tend to regard populism as 1) an ideology and 2) as a rhetorical or performative style. Additionally, in their wide literature review on populism,

Gidrow and Bonikowski (2013) pointed out three different approaches to it: 1) as a political ideology 2) a political style and 3) a political strategy.

Relevantly to this particular study, it is worth mentioning that some political scholars such as Mazzoleni (2008) connect these rhetorical and thus communicational elements of populism with the concept of the mediatization of politics. The mediatization of politics refers to the transfer of politics into the media – a concept that has been coined and made famous by Mazzoleni and Schultz (1999). More precisely, Mazzoleni went as far as saying that the media factor (the role of the media) is key in the significant rise of populism (Mazzoleni 2008; Mazzoleni, Stewart, Horsfield 2003). Furthermore, the point of populism as a communication style during the era of mediatization has been made frequently (Moffit 2016; Bobba, Legnante 2016; Block, Negrine 2017; Palonen, Saresma 2017, 15). This will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

It is important to point out that these categorizations of “what is populism” are by no means comprehensive or without their limitations. As Palonen and Saresma (2017, 16) themselves emphasize: media influence, rhetoric and ideology are not separate phenomena which can be differentiated in any simple way. It can thus be stated that even within the scientific community several definitions and approaches towards unfolding and understanding populism co-exist. The notion of populism itself is far from being uncontroversial, indeed different schools of thought cannot agree on which are the most relevant ones.

However, even if a common vision on what is populism has not yet been achieved – and might never be –, it is relevant to observe that most schools of thought and approaches are overlapping and complementary. This is also the case of the three approaches most relevant to this research: populism as an ideology, Ernesto Laclau’s views on the emptiness of populism and finally the rhetorical and communicational characteristics of populism observed as a performative style.

Historically, the range of the word populism as a political concept can be traced back to the end of the 19th century. During this time, both in Russia the “Narodnik” movement (*narod*, Russian for “the people”) and later in the USA



the “Populist Party” (1892) - also known as the “People’s Party” - were founded and started actively promoting policies which they regarded were for the people completely independently of each other (Goodwyn 1976; Herkman 2019). These are considered the first two political movements in history which started to refer to themselves as populists or as populist movements. The starting point for both of these so-called “original populist movements” was in their ultimate desire to enhance the circumstances and living conditions of peasants and farmers. One major difference between the US populists and the Russian “Narodniki” was however the fact that the American farmers were themselves leading their movement whereas in Russia the Narodniki-idea originated from the desire of middleclass intellectuals to romanticize the peasant life. This movement was initiated and finally seen through by the Russian “democratic intelligentsia” (Walicky 1969, 67). It is also important to note that the “Narodniki” movement was not without its anti-Tsarist motives. Even with their obvious cultural and contextual differences, both the US and Russian populists believed that the so-called peasant population – or in other words “the people” – were the cornerstone of society and the economy (Mudde, Kaltwasser 2012, 3; Herkman 2019). The origin of European and American populism is thus deeply related to agriculturally defined policies.

Moreover, Latin-America witnessed to the rise of populism as the great depression of the 1930’s developed. Unlike Marxists and socialists who had previously dominated the scene, the new populist politicians appealed to the masses referring to the people and not only to the working class. This populist rhetoric was considered rather effective as it had the ability to seem appealing to all people with disregard to their social class or status. Regarding Western Europe, populism has seen to surface properly only towards the second half of the 20th century (Mudde, Kaltwasser 2012, 3-4.) Particularly the timeframe which started from the 1950’s all the way to the 1970’s witnessed “the first real development of a modern body of scholarship on populism” according to Kaltwasser, Esperjo, Ostiguy and Taggart (see Kaltwasser et al. 2017, 5).

As one attempts to comprehensively open and explain the different dimensions of populism and some of the school of thought approaching this

concept, observing the word itself seems appropriate as it might unfold some of its fundamental features. What does the word “populism” itself tell us in terms of its occurrences at the textual level? “Populism” as a written and spoken word is associated with other “isms” in the language. One adds a suffix “-ism”, to the frame of the root word as an attempt to attach a way of thinking – a logic – to it. The etymology of populism unwraps the root word of the original term in Latin: *populus*, “the people”. Thus, we can say that the word “populism” is to some degree a way of thinking that puts the people at the centre (Stanley 2008, 100).

The idea of “the people” is certainly at the core of the definition of populism. According to Canovan (2002, 2), the concept of “the people” is as challenging to define as the concept of populism itself. The policies implemented in the name of the people have varied from the very left to the very right depending on the different political context and times (Liikanen 2003). Canovan (2005) points out that “the people” can also be an imagined one, but, even as such, it is nevertheless an actor – politicians act in the name of it as well as against it.

According to the political philosopher Laclau (2005), “people” as a concept is an empty signifier which is ready to take on every kind of content and to be used for several purposes accordingly. “The people” is an essential concept in political ideologies, but populism can also be connected to less political ideological trends if the latter include the concept of people’s sovereignty as one of their basic principles. Thus, one could claim that there is feministic populism, anarchic populism and populism which is related to different religions. Hafez (2017) for example has studied populism in terms of islamophobia and Bellè and Poggio (2018) concentrated on anti-gender populism which used rhetoric that emphasized the values of traditional nuclear families (heterosexual families) in order to attack women, gender- and sexual-minorities. “The people” as a central concept will be observed and studied in more depth in the following chapters within the contextual approaches.

Moving on to the interpretation of populism, we can interpret it firstly through the tensions of representation. Indeed, populism suggests solutions to

the struggles imposed on the people by conjuring an image about the unity and wholeness of a nation, simultaneously maintaining a great distance to everything which is seen as contrary to this concept of a united nation. These contrary elements typically are: foreigners, enemies, oligarchy and the elite. Populism attempts to strengthen itself by deepening and increasing these divisions and continuously condemning in ever so harder ways something that is external or alien to “the people” (Rosanvallon 2006, 210).

Populism, when used by politicians in their rhetoric is - among many other things - a fashion of communicating. On the one hand, it paints simplified pictures of unity and, on the other hand, division, and it does so by explaining and justifying this split through a strong characterisation of “us the people” versus “them, those foreigners and enemies”. Accordingly, Taguieff (2015) sees populism as a political and rhetorical anti-elite style. In his view, the word “populism” should however be redefined, since he makes a clear distinction between the so-called post-World War protest populism, nationalistic identity populism and the populism which is very common to most politicians today that he does not see as so harmful or vindictive. In his work, Taguieff that it is alarming if politicians’ populist rhetoric underlines nationalism and open hostility towards the faith of Islam. Besides Rosanvallon and Taguieff, also Müller (2016) sees that the element of anti-establishment is at the very core of populism, adding that populism itself is the shadow of the modern European representative democracy.

In public discourse, populism often receives a good/bad evaluation, either as the heroic attempt to fight for the people or as the main threat to government and democracy. Additionally, several political scholars approach populism with a sense of criticism and see it more as a threat and an unhealthy element (Rosanvallon 2008; Müller 2016; Pappas 2016). On the other hand, some of the mentioned scholars, like Laclau and Taguieff, weigh populism as an essential part or at least a by-product of modern-day democracy. Rosanvallon (2008, 210-211) bases his critique towards populism is on his view of populism and populists as an illness and crisis of representative democracy and as something sinister which can bring liberal democracy to a wrong and

improper path. Similarly to Rosanvallon, Müller (2016, 17-18) in his thinking as he emphasizes that populism is defined by the opposing of pluralism. The prerequisite of democracy is an equal system which openly acknowledges the mutual differences and the diversity of the people. As populist actors tend to oppose the idea that the people are indeed a heterogeneous group it can be stated that they oppose democracy (Müller 2016; Mudde 2019; Herkman 2019).

Rosanvallon (2008, 212-215) further elaborates his critique on populism as he explains the three essential contradictions that go along with populism. First, he talks about the disease of populism in terms of freedom and control in society. As the criticism of the exercise of power is necessary in a democratic society, Rosanvallon argues that the characteristic criticism by populists towards the ones in power will eventually transform into a continuous scapegoating and vindication of official authorities. This can eventually bring a society to a situation where authorities are regarded as aggressive and vindictive external forces that are not part of society.

The second contradiction is related to the notion that populists are anti-establishment and anti-system in their approach. This contradiction emerges as one understands that, whilst the populists are against “the system”, they simultaneously crave to be a relevant part of it – on a political level at the very least. Contemporary populism is not interested to “fight the fight” on the battlefields of the accustomed norms and traditional political arenas. It strives to generate fear in people with the narrative of the moral decay of today’s society and it seeks to present itself as the saviour of the people.

The third contradiction pointed out by Rosanvallon is the general exaggerative and hyperbolic nature of the conception of the fulfilment of the will of the people and the right of the people to act as a judging force of society that can even overrule the judiciary one. Following Rosanvallon, populists set the people themselves as a final judge of society with this rhetoric underlining the untouchable rights of the people. Thus, as the populists claim that they are for the people, they are also advocates of their own mission and they are both judges and recipients of their own imagined/real special status.

Paul Taggart (2000) too emphasized as central in populism a strong longing for the “good old times” when things were better. He sees that the people’s longing for a heartland relays to the very essence of what defines populism. This utopian right of the people is certainly one of the complementary elements in Rosanvallon’s and Taggart’s views: their birth-right back to their past sets them apart of others.

In contemporary social debate and public discourse, one can easily see how the notion that populism during the 21st century has become particularly mainstream or how populist actors and populist discourse has become increasingly topical if compared to the previous century. As a consequence, also political scholars have spent a fair amount of time discussing and debating the subject of the success of contemporary populism. According to Palonen and Kovala (2018, 11) the rapid social changes of recent years, multicultural challenges and societal inequalities have been particularly prominent in the media and have thus gained a lot of publicity. This image of societal insecurity conveyed by the media has given support to populists, and often populist rhetoric shows a certain appeal against the elites or immigration and immigrants themselves, justified by a tragedy or terrorist attack in one’s own country or in the world on the whole. Finally, Vaarakallio (2018, 207), while focusing on populism in the context of media, notes that populism often co-occurs with crisis-related discourse when portrayed on the media.

The so-called rise of populism in modern times can also be regarded a signal that, as old class structures become blurred, society in general is nowadays more and more difficult to understand (Rosanvallon 2008, 210). This explanation for the popularity of populism makes sense, as populists are characterized by providing “easy-to-chew” answers to complex problems. On the other hand, as has been discussed earlier, one should always bear in mind that populist actors and populist rhetoric have been on the scene for more than 150 years now.

Table 1 below presents several major schools of thought and approaches towards understanding populism made by Herkman (2019). This table is by no means meant to be an exhaustive or all-encompassing map of theories of

populism. As has been established already in this chapter, there are several other famous political scientists whose contributions in the field have been mentioned, but for the purposes of this research a greater emphasis will be given to populism as an ideology (1.2), Laclau's views on the emptiness of populism (1.2.1) and finally to the rhetorical and communicational characteristics of populism as a performative style (1.3). Laclau's views on populism are relevant in their own right, but his notions shall also function to bridge the gap between the ideational approach and the performative style approach. Before moving towards Mudde's ideational approach in the next chapter, a brief overview on populism and nationalism will be presented as a background.

<b>The starting point for the definition</b>	<b>Core emphasis</b>	<b>The actor of populism</b>	<b>Well-known theorist</b>
<i>Ideology, heartland</i>	The Confrontation between “the people” and “the elite”	“The forgotten people”	Cas Mudde, Paul Taggart
<i>Political style</i>	Rhetoric and performing	Politician, the party	Pierre-André Taguieff, Benjamin Moffit
<i>Political movement</i>	Political grouping	The party, a social movement	Margaret Canovan
<i>Political self-determination</i>	Political identity, affectivity	A social movement, a political group	Ernesto Laclau

*Table 1. The different schools of thought on defining populism (Herkman 2019).*

### *1.1.1. Populism and Nationalism*

As it has been accomplished in the previous section: the concept of “the people” is at the core of the definition of populism. “The people” as a concept are seen as a type of group, and a group is always something where one either

belongs or does not belong to. Populist rhetoric often relies on this notion of a united, homogenous people (Rosanvallon 2008; 2010) or then it contains a nationalistic dimension of sorts (Fryklun 2018, 41). Eatwell and Goodwin (2018, 6) go as far as calling national populism an ideology in its own right. The concept of a united homogenous people or in other words the concept of a united “us” is closely associated with the ideas of social identity (Turner 1987) and cultural identity (Hall 1999).

These classic ideas drawn from social psychology and cultural research bring to light an essential angle about the foundations of populist rhetoric and about why discourse emphasizing the importance of the people and us versus them is so efficient. The characteristic element of populism underlining the significance of belonging to one’s own tribe is associated with very fundamental incidents of the human nature and to the formations of identity. It is natural for a person to associate themselves with a group of like-minded individuals. In order to evaluate and strengthen one’s own opinions and abilities, and to validate one’s own beliefs and values, one has an innate need to compare oneself to so-called similar others. This identity formed in relation to other people becomes the basis for the individual’s attitudes and behaviour. The qualities that a person associates with their own personality as qualities of a social group, form their social identity. In addition to their own identity, people judge other people by whether they are part of their inner group of the mentioned similar others. Such social categorization leads to the notion of group formation. People seek a positive social identity, and, in this way, they also evaluate their own inner group positively. People also express their belonging to a group through common symbols that express a collective identity (Turner 1987).

Hall (1999) too writes about the same inner group / out-group phenomenon in the context of national culture. National culture can be seen as a kind of imaginary community made up of symbols and representations. In this sense, national cultures construct an individual’s identity by creating meanings of a nation into which one can identify. Equating these symbols with expressions of the culture of one nation is a way of unifying national identity.

Furthermore, the construction of national identity is also characterized by the discourse of us and others, the central feature of which is the splitting of the world (Hall 1999, 122): the world is indeed divided between “us” and “them”, i.e. “us”=“good” and “them”=“evil”. It is now clear how this dichotomy also resonates within populist discourse. All other differences within and between these two extremes are simplified and merged into the extremes (Hall 2000, 122).

According to Oliver and Rahn (2016) the unified “us” in populism is created by identifying the common outer and inner enemies of the people. The social identity and inner group are generated by constructing a unified other, thus explaining why nativism and racism are rather general features in populist movements. The construction of a unified other is very clear, for example, in the rhetoric of many European populist movements, in which refugees or immigrants are portrayed as strangers, enemies and invaders. It is important to note, however, that not all populisms nor all populist movements are to be considered xenophobic or nationalistic (see for instance the concept of “inclusive populism” as reported by Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). Some scholars such as Palonen and Saesma (2017, 15) do not equate populism with nationalism as the first does not necessarily contain the idea of producing the “pure people” which is instead characteristic for nationalism. Nonetheless, suspicions and even open xenophobia towards foreigners often rises to the centre of the agenda of populists due to the confrontation which underlines their world view or as mentioned: thin ideology.

Populist petitions and policies typically include a national dimension. This national dimension is related firstly to whom is seen as belonging to the people and secondly to whom the benefits provided by the state belong. People who are identified or perceived as having different ethnic backgrounds are not considered to belong to “the real people”. Additionally, social benefits provided by the state are perceived to belong only to an ethnically cohesive majority of the population, in other words to “the real people”. It goes without saying, suspicion towards foreigners is typical of populist movements, especially in Europe, and the above-mentioned emphasis on ethnically united



people often leads to xenophobia and/or racism. However, the question of how this form of nationalism manifests itself in the appeals of populist actors varies from country to country and is defined accordingly in different states based on the individual culture and history of each country. (Fryklund 2018, 41.)

According to Rosanvallon (2008, 210-211), populism relies on the idea of a united people and it distances itself from anything that is considered the opposite of that. It seeks to strengthen its ideology by condemning outsiders, whether they are called foreigners, enemies, oligarchs or elites. The so-called united nation glorified by populism has no dividing lines because it has no relations with anything other than itself. Looking at the key aspirations of recent populist movements, Rosanvallon's description also receives empirical support. Within their rhetoric, populist actors around the world are actively seeking to get rid of interstate alliances or downplay the importance of such alliances or diplomatic relations.

### *1.2 Populism as an ideology*

The concept of ideology is by no degree more unequivocal than the concepts of populism or "the people". In a broad sense, ideology refers to a system of thoughts and beliefs which guide people's behaviour. In the Marxist theory for example, ideology is seen as the ability of the capitalist system to produce societal structures, institutions and practices which allows capitalism to renew itself as much as justify its existence (Herkman 2019, 34). In cultural sciences, ideology is identified with common beliefs or the so-called common sense, which further helps people in their attempt to structure the world around them (Hall 1992).

According to Freedman (1996, 545-546) a thick ideology consists of 1) substantial internal integration, 2) a rich core attached to a wide range of political concepts, 3) the capacity to exhibit a broad range of concepts and political positions, 4) a reasonably broad range of answers to the political questions of society, 5) far-reaching ideational ambitions and scope, 6) a

sufficiently cohesive and intricate ideological product and 7) unity among ideological producers.

For the last 15 years, the most popular and widely cited definition of populism has been Mudde's ideational approach. According to Mudde (2004, p. 543) populism is an ideology which is thin in its substance as it claims that our society is to its essence divided into two groups: the homogeneous and pure people and the antagonistic corrupt elite. This thin ideology argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* ("general will") of the people and that populism in itself consists of two opposites: elitism and pluralism. Mudde's ideational approach has thus three essential concepts in it: 1) the thinness of the ideology which henceforth does not offer a precisely defined set of values; 2) the opposing positions between the pure people and the corrupt and antagonistic elites which as such is presented as a position of morals –authentic or real people have the ownership of the general will and they represent a 100% homogenous group; 3) as the people are a monolithic entity and they claim moral superiority of the general will, it is then logical that their opinion should be the one which shapes politics directly and effectively.

In addition to these three concepts, Mudde's ideational definition has four major elements: ideology, people, elite and general will (Mudde 2017, p.29). In regard to ideology, Mudde explains that "an ideology is a body of normative ideas about the nature of man and society as well as the organization and purposes of society" (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 6). For this definition, Mudde drew inspiration from Freedman's views on ideology which have been briefly discussed above.

In discussing the essential concept of "the people", Mudde distanciates himself from Laclau's "empty signifier" (Laclau 2005), arguing instead that "the people" is not a concept which is ready to assume every kind of content (Mudde 2017, 30). He then adds that "the people" as a concept is flexible and can be merged with nationalism (see for example Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017). It is certainly true, but "the people" always appeals to a higher level of moral code, honesty and a certain sense of belonging (Taggart, 2000; Herkman 2019).

By the same token, the concept of the elites has a certain moral charge in it when it comes to populism. The elites within their position of political and economic power manifest a concrete threat for the pure people and hence are in the way in order to execute their political rights (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 12-14).

The fourth element of Mudde's definition, the general will, is based on the theories of representation by the famous philosopher Rousseau (2002). According to Rousseau's theories, political representation is an anathema for popular sovereignty as true democracy is ultimately contradictory with representative democracy. Mudde saw that Rousseau's take on general will connects to two major concepts of populism: common sense and special interest (Mudde 2017, 33). He specified that the idea of populism contains the notion that politics should be executed always according to the prioritization of the needs of common people, by common sense and always in contrast to the special interests of the corrupt elite.

This ideational definition by Mudde defines populism through the lenses of ideology and is, as mentioned, one of the most accepted and adopted ones in contemporary literature, meaning that scholars who might have taken a different approach towards populism, still consider Mudde's definition as a starting point. Such has been the case with works as Geurkin et al. (2019) in their attempt to measure populist attitudes, as well as Rooduijn et al. (2014) in their study of populist contagion in Western European parties and in the work of Wirth and Esser et al. (2018) as they constructed a theoretical model in order to analyse populist communication, just to mention a couple of an exhaustive list of publications.

The ideational approach is an umbrella term covering different aspects of research that regards populism first and foremost as a set of ideas, boiling populism down to its minimal ideational core (see Hatakka 2019, 29). However, even as Mudde's definition was in its own right a prominent breakthrough within the discourse on populism by political scientists, it is by no means an original idea nor was he the first one to utilize the concept of ideology while defining populism. The importance of considering ideology in

defining populism has widely contributed to academic debate and has been an effort already acknowledged by several scholars (see for example: Shils 1957; MacRae 1969; Walicky 1969; Canovan on “populist democracy” 1981, p.173). MacRae (1969) stressed as early as the late 1960s that populism should be considered first and foremost as an ideology, and, in his opinion, primitivism is at the centre of the ideology of populism. He argued that this primitivism was characterized by anti-intellectuality and a sort of a pursuit towards authenticity as well as a romantic and conservative utopianism. MacRae’s view shows the overlap between the different approaches even under the arch of “populism as an ideology” – indeed, as this aspect of longing for the past strongly resonates with the idea put forward by Taggart (2000) who argued that the success of populism is connected to a strong longing for the “good old times”.

Ionescu and Gellner (1969) also stressed the significance of measuring populism through ideology in their ground-breaking work. If one focuses on the earliest research that presented the concept of ideology in regard to populism, it worth mentioning that, already in the late 1960s, the concept of ideology in sociology and political studies was considered a controversial one (Herkman 2019, 36).

Outside of the scope of thin ideology, Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012, 7-8) have analysed different attempts to conceptualize populism. In their research, they strove to find a common denominator from the most essential and notable definitions of populism. As a direct result, they came up with the so-called “minimum criterion” for populism as a concept. They claim that all the embodiments of populism comprise a form of appeal to the people as well as being against the so-called elites. Canovan too (1984, 294) came to this conclusion years earlier, thus to the contemporary reader it becomes clear that the tensions between the concepts of “the people” and “the elites” lie at the heart of our understanding of present-day populism.

In addition, Stanley (2008, 102) considers populism as an ideology with a mission to lift up the people as the primary subject of politics and to support the position of the people on this stand. He too sees “the people” and “the elite” as major concepts and as he elaborates his ideological approach further,

he comes to define the core of populism as consisting of four related concepts and values:

“1) There exist two units: the people and the elite, 2) the relationship between the people and the elite is one where they oppose each other thus it is antagonistic, 3) the sovereignty of the people is essential and 4) the value of the people is being emphasized as the value of the elites is being reduced”  
(Stanley 2008, 103)

From this point of view, the so-called ideology of populism sees that society is divided into two polar opposites: “the people” and “the elites”. By this line of thought, the elites are viewed as the unit which contains all of the decisive powers in societal terms, but it is regarded as completely corrupt. It does not represent the views or opinions of the majority, i.e. the people. On top of this ontological claim about the soul character of society, populism also contains a certain ideal. It does not ultimately only claim to define how the society is, but also how it should be: without the ruling and corrupt elites and rather with politics that will always prioritize the will of the people.

Worsley (1969) does not however classify populism as an ideology which would be comparable to other political ideologies such as communism or liberalism. He describes populism as a dimension of political culture which can manifest itself in a context where two ideologically different political movements meet and face each other. In this sense, the notion of a thin ideology is appropriate in explaining the fact that populists can come from both sides of the political spectrum: left and right. It also might be from neither side (De Benoist 2017).

Stanley (2008, 95-96) sees the thin character of populism as an indication that it is incapable of being an independently operating political ideology, because it lacks the ability to present wide and consistent answers to relevant and topical political issues. This thinness in populism leads to the fact that often it is perceived as a complementary ideology, and it feeds into the so-called “full” or “comprehensive” ideologies (Stanley 2008, 107). Palonen (2016), on the other hand, argues that populism is a blind ideology exactly

because it lacks substance. This means that it can be used by both left- and right-wing politicians, as it can be exclusive and inclusive at the same time. It also can be stated that populism as such simplifies the political space, by disregarding the multifaceted and complex nature of political phenomena and replacing it with a sharp societal confrontation (Laclau 2005, 18).

In former research, emphasis has been given to the non-ideological populism in studies on radical right populism (see Ignazi 2003; Mudde 2007, 2019; Auers and Kasekamp 2013; Traverso 2019) as well as left-wing populism (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). In fact, Stavrakakis and Kasambekis (2014) propose a concept called “inclusive populism”. According to them, traditional right-wing populism going against immigration and viewing the people as a culturally united entity can be described as “exclusive populism”. By contrast, “inclusive populism” can be associated with left-wing populism and forms of it have emerged particularly in Latin American countries, but not exclusively. Indeed, some European left-wing populist parties which have emerged recently such as the Greek Syriza (founded in 2004) and the Spanish Podemos (founded in 2014) can be regarded as examples of “inclusive populism”. This type of populism appeals to the will of the people and it antagonizes the elites – just like right-wing populism – but it simultaneously strives to achieve equality and its definitions of the people do not exclude anyone based on their ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation. In addition, Palonen and Saresma (2017, 24) emphasize that left-wing populism – unlike its right-wing counterpart – is not anti-immigration as it rather focuses on policies that question the actions of the economic elites.

Moffit (2016) does not criticize the ideational approach per se but argues that as ideological approaches in general focus on the analysis of ideas, values and sets of beliefs, they do not give emphasis to the performative elements of populism. According to Aslanidis (2016), populism is however not an ideology – not wholesome nor thin – and it is rather defined as a discursive frame. This view is shared by Moffit (2017) who however emphasizes it more as a political style. Aslanidis rationalizes his claim undressing populism from its ideological attributes claiming that the widely accepted view of Mudde has 1)

complications with its thinness, 2) methodological inconsistencies and 3) is betrayed by degreeism.

As methodological inconsistencies can always be debated, points 1 and 3 are more relevant in Aslanidis' rationale. He makes his case about populism not being thin by referring to the work of Freedman (1996) where attributes to thick ideologies are being listed as we have mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. In the view of Aslanidis, populism does not even closely meet the set of criteria by Freedman. He further argues that the definition of populism as a thin ideology is not a solid one on the basis that as one can certainly classify different types of populism based on their subtypes (such as agrarian populism, neoliberal populism, national populism and so on), one cannot not unequivocally calculate or quantify its degrees. Whether or not one shares the views of Aslanidis on this matter, it seems however appropriate to be aware that there are various and recent numbers of quantitative research which indeed have not only acknowledged the degrees of populism but have also done their best to measure it (for example: Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Hawkins 2009; Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Pauwels 2011; March 2012; Hawkins et al. 2012; Vasilopoulou et al. 2014; Bernhad et al. 2015; Aslanidis 2015). Mudde himself has replied to the criticism towards the concept of thinness in his definition, by arguing that most of the times issues such as these represent a minor problem compared to the actual aim of the researchers and furthermore: the concept of a thin ideology allows for a higher degree of flexibility in comparative analyses of populism (Mudde 2017, 31).

Contrary to Aslanidis, Stanely (2008) as mentioned before regards the quality of thinness as the actual strength of populism as it in his view is as a complementary ideology. As it is clear that populism is not an ideology in the sense of capitalism, conservatism, liberalism or nationalism according to the previous theories of ideology, it does not mean however that populism has nothing to do with ideology (Herkman 2019, 36)

Wherever one draws the line between the debate of populism as a thick or thin ideology, it is exactly the chameleon-like nature of this concept that explains its leverage and connections to several political movements and points

of view. Whether or not populist actors are in fact actors which are driven by their ideology, it is clear that they have the ability to utilize elements of different ideologies when it suits their purposes. I suggest that it is important to make a distinction between what is clearly an ideology and what is, on the other hand, “ideological”. “Ideological” refers to the use of certain ideological systems and the execution of those ideas for different moral or political purposes. In these regards, Canovan (2002, 30-33) points out that even as populism is not a full or a complete ideology, it does not make it unpolitical or un-ideological. Therefore, even as populism is not an ideology, it is or can be nevertheless ideological. Finally, the ideational definition constitutes a valid and a concrete way to approach populism in order to understand it at least partially.

### *1.2.1 Ernesto Laclau – views on the emptiness of populism*

The analysis of populism as a thin and empty ideology which can be used by politicians from any political background (from left to the right) is relevant especially in terms of political rhetoric and communication. As one navigates through the various definitions of populism from ideology to a style and rhetoric, it is appropriate to take a look at the views of political philosopher Laclau, whose ideas seem to bridge the gaps existing between these schools of thought. Laclau (2005, 222) claimed that populism is “the very essence of political”.

As early as in the 1970s Laclau presented the so-called *articulation* theory to describe the multifaceted elements of populism (Herkman 2019, 38). Laclau (1977) took a critical approach towards the orthodox-Marxist theory which views that class structures explain the starting points and eventual differences between political movements. According to Herkman (2019, 38), Laclau, who was personally involved with the motions of the leftist movements during the 1960s and the 1970s, observed that political representation did not adapt to class structures – or vice versa – and it had more to do with cultural outlines and impressions instead.



While elaborating his theory, Laclau followed the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) who died during imprisonment by the government of Mussolini. In particular Laclau focused on Gramsci's ideas of hegemony according to which positions of power in society were maintained mainly by the use of persuasion and continuous negotiations instead of class structures which are carved in stone. Gramsci believed that one has to gain the acceptance of those who are subordinated in order to achieve a hegemonic power, and this acceptance is achievable only by appealing to culturally common values, morals and ideologies (Gramsci 1982).

According to Laclau's theory on articulation, social classes do not necessarily really represent real groups of people, because these classes ultimately are born from the interpretations of class structures which are often observed and valued according to different cultural meanings which have nothing to do with class. Therefore, different ideologies and cultural meanings can be articulated or combined together in a way that enables populism to portray itself as something that provides answers to the political demands of any particular time. For example, in right-wing populism conservatism, nationalism and xenophobia fit well together as a policy, without a particular class structural motive behind it. In populism, the notion of the forgotten people has great significance, but that concept of "the people" is not tied to any particular class (Laclau 1977, 160-166).

Laclau's *articulation* theory explains why populism is a thin rather than a thick ideology and while also showing how various ideologies can even randomly unite within populism. Stuart Hall (1992) has emphasized the importance of focusing on the context at hand, if one truly attempts to understand the origins of political articulation. A more practical example of this can be seen in Laclau's *cultural articulation* (1977, 167), according to which several – amongst themselves – very different political movements use the same ideologically charged symbols in their attempts to appeal to their voters. National symbols such as flags and coat of arms traditionally have these kinds of signifiers (Herkman 2019, 39).

If we then consider definitions, Laclau (2005) did not regard populism as an ideology nor as a political movement. He strove to resolve the challenges of defining populism by approaching it as a process and not as an entity. Laclau believed that it is exactly because populism is so often being defined through these entity-essential phenomena that scholars run into difficulties which then lead to an outcome where populism is impossible to be defined. As a consequence, Laclau believed that populism has to do with the processes of political logic where, for example, a certain group of people recognizes themselves a political actor: the group of people who previously have felt as being pushed aside from political debate, now consider themselves as the representatives of the *forgotten people*, as such they begin to define themselves as the people and they start opposing some other group. This group or groups that are then being selected as opposing actors are often: the political classes, the cultural and/or economic elites, but additionally they consist of foreigners, immigrants, sexual minorities and multinational corporations and the media (Herkman 2019, 53). As many other scholars whose definitions we have so far observed, Laclau argued that populism is ultimately about the opposing concepts of *us* and *them*, thus being clearly associated with the construction of identity (Laclau 2005, 94).

As Laclau regarded populism as a process, he also argues (2005) that a populist process concerns the dissatisfaction with the established political system and parties in a particular time in history and in a particular context which manifests itself in various kinds of societal and political demands. Herkman (2019, 54) argues that even as these demands might appear ideologically contradictory or very different, they reshape themselves in a chain and create the possibility for a new united political movement. In this regard, demands which would differentiate themselves from the point of view of right-wing or left-wing policies can actually be united in the identity-process of a populist movement which emphasizes the importance of *being heard* or *taking back the power to the people*. Populism can thus be seen through the fact that it has both an affective and mobilizing attribute to it.

Criticism to Laclaus's definition mainly points out that populism as a concept seems too wide and risks therefore to become indefinable: it covers the politicization of issues as well as the political group forming on a very wide scope (Bowman 2007; Arditì 2010). Be that as it may, the approach of Laclau might just be the only theory which has so far covered all forms of populism and rationalizes the appeal of populism from an individual point of view as well as from a communal perspective. This political *self-determination* process is further explained through the concepts of *empty signifier* and *floating signifier*, which Laclau has borrowed from anthropologist Lévi-Strauss and psychoanalyst Lacan (see Herkman 2019; Vainikkala 2020).

According to Laclau the concepts of *people* and *elite* are examples of *empty signifiers* which have been emptied or stripped from their solid meanings in a complicated reality. Temporary populist opinions use these *empty signifiers* in order to shape the concept of a united people as a political actor. By the emptiness of the signifier, Laclau does not only refer to the freedom of movement of the signifier (the arbitrariness described by Saussurean linguistics) in relation to what is signified or what is meant, but also to the point within the formation of discourse where different demands begin to be named together. An *empty signifier* is, for example, the affective name of a leader to which many special requirements with their values and meanings can be loaded upon to. Charging takes place through a variety of shifts of meanings, which Laclau describes through figures and tropes familiar from rhetoric, such as metaphors (Vainikkala 2020).

With the use of these *empty signifiers*, one is able to produce a political frontline which unites different supporters and demands to each other maybe using the names of populist leaders, parties and political enemies as general signifiers in the construction of populist identity (Herkman 2019, 56).

In the inputs through such rhetorical movements, the signifiers become unifying and excluding political magnets. In their "emptiness" and transitions, they become entities which are *all inviting*, and concrete demands can be combined with a broad challenge to the system and a notion of fullness called "the people". As an infinite demand, this fantasy of an organic society creates

an internal border in society that must be constantly pushed towards its realization; in this process, the positive and negative charges reinforce each other (Vainikkala 2020). Following Laclau, this is how a “chain of similarities” or a series of equivalences is created; a chain that, in turn, creates and maintains a populist movement in which “the people”, the *populus*, is repeatedly formed as a fleeing horizon (Laclau 2007, 93-95, 110-111, 123, 166, 225). Herein lies the self-increasing rhetorical power of populism which is also a mechanism for the continued concentration of movement.

The *empty signifiers* are related to the *floating signifiers*, a notion that purports that the meanings of these signifiers are always renegotiable: they will never be filled permanently (Laclau 2005, 133). The *empty signifier* is conceptually preceded by the *floating signifier* and Laclau relies on it to be a focal point for the internal frontier that arises in society – a kind of relay through which many parties connect to create an anti-system dividing line. Nevertheless, it can happen that some new requirements are incompatible with a signifier that has been employed until then, thus exiting the chain of equality (i.e. the former relatively stable “state of representation”) and its definition of the outside. In such cases, *the empty signifier* becomes a *floating signifier*. The new investment has a greater transformative or disintegrating force, if it arises from a competing hegemonic project. With the concept of a *floating signifier*, Laclau also emphasizes the perpetual multidisciplinary nature of the social and political field – such nature explains why a “dialectical return” to the former is not possible (Laclau 2007, 123-124, 131, 156; Vainikkala 2020). Laclau himself says that the *empty* and *floating signifiers* cannot be separated from each other, a concept also supported by Palonen and Saresma (2017, 25-26) who see them as the two sides of the same coin.

By combining different levels of phenomena and different theoretical extract, Laclau purports that in all societies it always exists a certain *storehouse* of crude feelings of disorder, which are expressed in some symbols in complete isolation from political articulations. This approach finds its roots in psychoanalysis, linguistics and Marxism and has the merit to have opened

the door to a wider multidisciplinary way to frame populism (Anselmi, 2018, 30).

It is relevant to observe that Mudde's views on the ideological *thinness* of populism has paradoxically similar effects to Laclau's idea of *empty signifiers*, which would be in theory quite different. Both scholars argue that populism can be strengthened from many ideologies and also changed (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 6–7). As we have established before: Mudde incorporates both strictly ideological and more loose ideological aspects into the so-called ideational approach.

For Laclau, however, investments in *empty signifiers* are always conditions for the formation of discourse and movement itself, and the adaptability of populism follows from it. Of course, one can also say that it is again the weakness of the concept of ideology in Mudde's definition. According to Vainikkala (2020), Mudde's conception of ideology, which adheres to the content of ideas, can be supplemented with descriptions of the rhetorical formation and control of ideology, in other words, ideology can justify, mislead, integrate, break, and objectify.

The theory of populism by Laclau (2005) is based fundamentally on the skilful use of signifiers lacking any actual substance which explains that populism channels and gathers inside itself unattached demands which eventually receive a unifying meaning. An *empty signifier* in Laclau's definition refers to an expression which is empty because it is prospectively so full of meanings that in the end it does not stand for anything, or, on the other hand, is so broad that, in principle, everyone can approve of it.

Related to the emptiness of populism's substance, it is relevant to note that Mény and Surel (2002, 4) have referred to populism as an *empty shell*, whereas Canovan rejected this view. According to the latter, populism is not only an *empty shell*, but a core of interconnected principles which then characterize it. The first one, the backbone of the populist ideology, is the concept of "the people" which refers to the idea that democracy should be run by "the people" (Canovan 2002, 33).

As we have established, Laclau approached the challenges of defining populism by regarding it more as a process than an entity. The main argument that can be drawn from the Laclau's approach is that this constitutive logic of articulating the concepts of "the people", "the elites" and their characteristics creates political agency thus facilitating the emergence of historical subjects that can challenge hegemony (Mouffe, 2018). Populism can therefore be regarded as a political logic of articulation that unifies groups and individuals with various societal demands to form imagined alliances or *chains of equivalence* around empty signifiers that eventually constitute *a people* (Hatakka 2019, 26-27).

The understanding of this allows us to move forward and to observe populism through the lenses of political rhetoric and review the school of thought that considers it merely a style. Finally, as populists tend to be gifted narrators in the art of rhetoric, it is interesting to examine what Martin (2014, 3) points about communication in politics: persuasive speech can function as both the poison as well as the cure for democracy.

### *1.3 Political rhetoric and populism*

As rhetoric and communication in terms of populism are relevant concepts in this research, it is important to provide an overview of political rhetoric and campaign rhetoric.

#### *1.3.1 Political rhetoric*

Political rhetoric can be seen as an essential part of political communication, and according to Martin (2014, 168), it plays a key role in orienting people towards issues. However, before political rhetoric and communication is discussed any further, it is vital to briefly define the concept of *politics*.

The notion of politics itself finds several definitions as it can be regarded as a contest for power, negotiation, promotion of interests and "taking care of common affairs" (Paloheimo & Wiberg 1997, 193). A more abstract definition

of the same concept goes as follows: “[p]olitics is conversations flowing through institutionalized channels punctuated by the vote” (Paletz 1996, 109). In the language used by politicians themselves, politics has never been a notion that a dictionary entry or a field-specific handbook can exhaustively encompass (Wiesner et al. 2017, 3). The famous Italian poet and journalist Gabriele d’Annunzio (1863-1938) went even as far in his definition as merging aesthetics with the very essence of politics by stating that politics is nothing more than drama which has its own beauty and style (see Kunas 2014, 124).

When considering communication theories, Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999, 250) underline that without communication itself there is no politics since the purpose of political communication is purely political influencing where the latter is intended as a form of communication which aims to make an impact or change in its receivers (Jowett & O’Donnell 1986, 24). In addition, other scholars (Deutch 1963; Meadow 1980) have said that politics is indeed communication; finally, Wiesner et al. (2017, 1) view politics as an activity and debate that fundamentally includes rhetoric and communication, as a means of politics.

Having briefly established the concept of politics, I can now proceed to the definition of rhetoric in the context of politics in the modern day. The term “rhetoric” often refers to hollow spoken language or to language containing several metaphors and other figures of speech. Rhetoric can be defined as an unique human skill by which people communicate with each other and additionally as an action that manifests that particular skill (Foss, Foss & Trapp 1985, 11; Foss 1996, 4). According to this definition rhetoric is regarded as a symbolic action which is used to enable communication between individuals.

In more general terms, rhetoric is used to enable change, to coordinate thinking and actions into a specific direction, as well as to present new alternatives and for naming things (Hart 1997, 13-16). The changes that rhetoric suggests to its listeners are voluntary, but in the other hand, rhetoric constantly pursues to narrow the action and thinking alternatives of the listeners by only suggesting certain action- and thinking- patterns (Hart, 1997, 7). One could argue that rhetoric is a medium to influence and to persuade.

The concepts of “rhetoric” and “political” merge in the way its subject matter and use are being defined. Intrinsically political rhetoric deals with public issues which are regarded as political, and its aspiration is to change attitudes and opinions towards stated issues (Bitzer 1981, 225, 231; Denton and Hahn 1986, 5-6). Political rhetoric is not merely the message which politicians deliver to their citizens; it also includes each individual’s interpretation of that particular message. Every citizen who reflects and creates their own meanings about public issues, is in effect exercising political rhetoric (Bitzer 1981, 228).

Foster (2010, 4) argues that political communication is essentially defined by its relation to voters and their voting behaviour. Denver (2007) sees the interaction from a politician to a prospective voter - in the form of communication and rhetoric - aiming to persuade and influence the behaviour such voter, as a phenomenon as old as politics itself (Denver 2007, 125). According to Martin (2014, 1) the art of rhetoric is essentially the art of persuasion, and he further claims that it is difficult to imagine politics without rhetoric as politics by its very nature requires choices, options and decisions being made - as such rhetoric appears to us as the actual character of the political (Martin 2014, 2).

Rhetoric also gives political institutions an opportunity to settle conflicts and fulfil political trends either by activating or passivating other political agents, e.g. voters (Smith and Smith 1990, 226-227). A further purpose of political rhetoric is to direct the citizen’s ideas of individual needs towards communal ones and inspire in them communal thoughts, values, beliefs and experiences (Hart 1987, 69). Finally, Martin (2014, 3) argues that a political institution such as democracy has not much value without free speech (whether it be public or private) to persuade others of their value, or to hold politicians and governments accountable while demanding answers from them, or even of ourselves to become leaders. Consequently, without the freedom of speech – an open forum for addressing one’s own opinions – democracy does not have substance. From this perspective, political rhetoric and communication play a crucial role in the ways we view and value our western democracies.



In the field of political communication, many studies focus on understanding how voters are led or persuaded by elected officials or how officials use the art of argumentation and strategy while campaigning (González & Tanno 1997, 3). According to Palonen (1997, 75) rhetoric in the field of politics works equally as a research method as well as a viewpoint to it. Foster (2010) further highlights the increasing role of media and technology in political communication, and Martin (2014) foregrounds the cornerstone of it all: the rhetoric itself – from classic to the new – in all political interaction.

### *1.3.2 Campaign rhetoric*

Elections are in the very the core of democracy as they essentially enable the people to select their own leaders by active and involved participation. Election campaigning is a type of political communication and rhetoric which aims to make a difference in the attitudes, values, behaviour and beliefs of the audience. Lilleker describes (2006, 49) political campaigning as a chain of planned events, which seek to communicate a specific message to a specific crowd of people and, by influencing them, it attempts to receive their sympathy and support. The interaction and conversations between a nominee and a voter - taking place during a political campaign - are often targeted in order to convince the voter that the candidate in question is in fact qualified and reliable (Finstad & Isotalus 2005, 20). This interdependence of rhetoric and democracy has long been understood in our western society (Terrill 2015, 1).

Furthermore, Larson (2013, 334, 311) says that the re-emerging characteristics of a political campaign are its attempts to influence and persuade, agenda setting, to execute strategic and tactical aspects as well as the aim to conduct a certain image of a specific issue among the people. According to him, campaigning is a sequence of numerous communicational acts during a certain period of time: the campaigns often progress by a planned strategy firstly by catching the people's attention, then preparing them to decision making and finally to proposing them to act.

Today, the active and widespread use of different social media allows to examine communication patterns between candidates and voters and thus to underline the interactional side of political communication. Indeed, politicians have changed in their ways of campaigning and governing which is a straight consequence to the speed at which our society and technology are changing (Trent et al. 2011, 302) and (Isotalus 2017).

Despite these technological features in political communication, it still appears that most of the definitions of political campaigns emphasize the importance of the candidates' interactions and conversations with the potential voters, this applies to both traditional face-to-face communication and its technology-based forms. Hence, instead of dethroning the traditional ways of political campaigning and political communication, technology seems to have become an essential part of it.

Besides the inevitable digital technology aspects in political communication today, its interactional elements such as hope, needs and expectations, and the "multileveled interactional chain of events" also play a vital role in current political communication (Finstad & Isotalus 2005, 20; Stromback & Aalberg 2008).

In conclusion, all over the world political campaign communication has undergone a great change during the last decade. This means that politics has become more centralized into being personified, which in turn has led to the outcome where individual politicians play a far more visible role than the traditional parties.

### *1.3.3 Populism as a style: A form of rhetoric and communication*

In this work, populism is examined in the context of political communication, so in addition to understanding the ideological dimensions of it, it is important to thoroughly analyse populism from the lens of rhetoric too. Populism can be defined as a style of communication that manifests itself in

political rhetoric. The study of populist rhetoric has become increasingly popular in the recent years. Rhetoric has been analysed, for example, in parliamentary debates (Hafez 2017), in media statements by politicians (Hatakka et al. 2017) or in case studies examining the speeches of a particular politician such as Barack Obama (Kumar 2014) or Donald Trump (Oliver and Rahn 2016; Lakoff 2017). However even before these, the term of *political style* in relation to literature on populism has been put forward and it has been used in an attempt to study the political communication of populist actors (Canovan 1999; Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Taguieff 1995).

The never-ending debate on whether populism is an ideology or not has led some scholars to assess that it is simply a performative style – isolating it from its other elements. If populism is however only understood as a style that can be adopted – any politician could eventually become a populist. According to Herkman (2019, 41), this school of thought is appreciated especially in the Anglo-American political culture where rhetoric and performative skills are often placed at the centre of political substance. According to Palonen and Saresma (2017, 40), rhetoric and its struggles create meanings in society, and rhetoric itself can be understood as a means of acting in politics.

In addition to the *Aristotelian research tradition*, rhetoric usually refers to the ability to use language in a social or political context or then the ability to persuade someone using linguistic means (Ilie 2008). In the view of Parry-Giles and Samek (2008), research in political rhetoric focuses on examining the role of persuasion and influence in the political process. Therefore, the study of rhetoric always corresponds to an analysis of a type of communication that seeks to persuade. Thus, if populism is understood as political rhetoric, the underlying assumption is that populist communication seeks to influence the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours of its listeners.

In this regard, the already mentioned approach to populism by Weyland theorized as a *political strategy* is relevant to mention, but not expedient to the purposes of this research. Weyland's view on populism is quite opportunistic and is defined as “a political strategy through which a *personalistic* leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, un-

institutionalized relationship with voters” (Weyand, 2001, p.14). However, even if Weyland’s views and contribution to the academic field of populism are unquestionable, they seem to be lacking and outdated to be relevant to this study. This is why in the section to come (1.3.4), emphasis will be given to a more recent and elaborated approach towards studying rhetoric and communication of populists actors.

According to Moffit (2016, 29) there are two main theorists who stand out for their early work utilizing the concept of *political style*, Taguieff and Canovan. Taguieff argued that populism

“does embody a particular type of political regime, nor does it define a particular ideological content. It is a political style applicable to various ideological frameworks” (1995, 9)

Despite this, whilst inputting an actual meaning to the concept of political style Taguieff also argued that “populism can only be conceptualized as a type of social and political *mobilization*, which means that the term can only designate a *dimension* of political action or discourse” (1995, 9). Following Moffit (2016, 29-30), Taguieff does open up his conception of populism from this point of view, even as it still remains somewhat unclear what a political style actually is.

As has been mentioned before, Canovan is another pioneer in terms of theorizing political style for the purposes of understanding and explaining populism. Canovan famously stated in 1984 that the only feature that links populist actors is their “rhetorical style which relies heavily upon appeals to the people” (1984, 313). According to Canovan, populism was always a matter of style much rather than substance (1984, 314). Canovan’s works shares something with Taguieff’s especially in his definition of populist rhetorical appeal to “the people”. Canovan (1999, 3) further argued that “populism in modern democratic societies is best seen as an appeal to *the people* against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society” and, according to Moffit (2016, 30), Canovan’s emphasis on this feature dictates populism’s characteristic legitimating framework: political

style and mood. Moffit then concludes that focusing on populism's political style means moving beyond the simple framing of "the people" against those in power additionally taking into consideration "the way" that this appeal is shaped and delivered (Moffit 2016, 30).

Canova's view was met with academic success as it inspired Jagers and Walgrave (2006) for identifying in their wide study on Belgian parties three main elements of the populist rhetoric style:

- 1) referring to the people
- 2) anti-elitism
- 3) defining outgroups (not part of the people)

Out of these elements, the researchers were able to construct indexes which enabled them to compare how populist the rhetoric of different parties was. As the authors themselves admit that defining populism purely as a rhetorical style is somewhat lacking, their research nevertheless demonstrate that populism can be found and measured in the rhetoric and communication of political actors.

There are several definitions of populism as political style or political communication, but the concepts that these definitions have in common are the "referring to the people" and opposing to the elites and those "who are not the people" (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Reinemann et al. 2017). Understanding and defining populism as a political style is useful in empirical studies, but Jagers and Walgrave (2006, 336-337) emphasized that ascribing populism to a mere political style is not enough to explain it. Indeed, limiting populism to a style is lacking just as it is regarding it simply as an attempt to appeal to the people, exactly because not all provoking or electric rhetoric in politics is populist (Herkman 2019, 45).

This notwithstanding, understanding populism at least partly as a political style can be useful in order to advance empiric research. If a political scientist is able to define populism through certain rhetoric or performative concepts such as political style, then it is also possible to measure and analyse these

concepts quantitatively and qualitatively. Thus, it becomes crucial to define the concept of political style itself.

#### 1.3.4 Political style: What is it?

According to Moffit (2016, 32) the first step to make in order to make sense of the term *political style* is to consider its usage in the so-called wider academic literature. As previously established, the terms *populism*, *the people* and *ideology* are not simple or unambiguous and therefore they are challenging to define at full length. When approaching the concept of *political style* within populism, it is important not to confuse it with the approach that underlines the *discourse*-centered understanding of populism (Hawkins 2010) that appears to be strongly connected with Laclau's theories.

In relative recent literature, Hariman (1995) Ankersmit (2002) and Pels (2003) have individually made an effort to introduce *political style* as a legit and useful concept for political analysis in the school of thought of rhetoric, political philosophy and political sociology. In his work, Hariman (1995, 187) defines political style as

- 1) A set of rules for speech and conduct guiding the alignment of signs and situations, or text and acts, or behavior and place;
- 2) informing practices of communication and display;
- 3) operating through a repertoire of rhetorical conventions depending on aesthetic reactions;
- and 4) determining individual identity, providing social cohesion, and distributing power.

Hariman identifies with his definition four main political styles (see Table 2 below): 1) realist, 2) courtly, 3) republican and 4) bureaucratic. Hariman further construes his views on them by applying a hermeneutic close reading of a text that in his view is indicative of the style. Then he applies them concretely into contemporary political situations (see Moffit 2016, 34-35).

Style	Characteristics	Text
<b>Realist</b>	Views the political realm as the state of nature: agents as rational actors; is	<i>The Prince - Machiavelli</i>

	indicative of the “common sense” of modern politics	
<b>Courtly</b>	Locates authority in the body of the sovereign; preferences gestural conduct	<i>The Emperor; Downfall of an Aristocrat - Kapušinški</i>
<b>Republican</b>	Preferences verbal and oratorical skill; civic virtue	<i>Cicero’s letters to Atticus</i>
<b>Bureaucratic</b>	Preferences clear definitions; technicality; seen in writing and “office culture”	<i>The Castle - Kafka</i>

Table 2 Political styles (Hariman, 1995)

Moffit (2016) argues that the strong influence of Weber is clear in Hariman’s reasoning. The political styles developed by Hariman are set up as ideal types and in fact argue that political styles and their related texts are not “mirrors of nature”, as such, but rather attempts to capture a political moment for critical analysis (Moffit 2016, 35). Hariman’s intuition of considering style as an analytical category for understanding social reality (Hariman 1995, 9) makes his specs useful to provide analytical categorizations of political styles to the extent that they are considered just as one out of many ways of approaching style as a political concept.

Unlike Hariman who’s contribution originated from the school of thought of rhetoric, Ankersmit (1996) approached political style from the point of view of political philosophy. He argues that the concept of political style offers the most accurate way for theorizing how citizens most commonly relate to the fractured, fragmented and postmodern nature of modern political reality. Furthermore, Ankersmit saw that this was due to the complicated technocratic nature of modern politics, whereby the complex technical details of policy, governance and political processes are often incomprehensible to the general public (see Moffit 2016, 35).

According to Ankersmit (1996, 158), political style represents the means by “which citizens can regain their grip on a complex political reality”. Moffit

(2016, 36) offers a somewhat similar explanation of Ankersmit's standpoint by stating that: in the same fashion voting for a certain political candidate does not require the knowledge of every single technical detail on how the electorate works, how the candidate will ultimately be selected or not selected, how they have been pre-selected and how what are the depths of their proposed policies – one might simply have liked the candidate for several other personal reasons: the way they carried themselves or other physical characteristics.

Ankersmit himself responded to criticism which he faced due to the unscientific and superficial nature of his concept of political style with the following:

“[t]he notion of style is unscientific and “superficial” in the proper sense of that word, but this is precisely why we need it so much: for in our dealings with other human beings we are interested in what goes on between us, so in what is on the surface of the behavior of the other; so to speak”. (Ankersmit 2002, 151)

In Moffit's opinion (2016, 36), one cannot simply overlook Ankersmit's work because it makes an important point: political style might not reveal a profound psychological truth about the other, but it is located at the level of the most common and daily experience of politics.

In the work of Pels (2003, 45), style is meant as an heterogenous entity of different ways of acting, looking, speaking and handling of issues, all of which then merges into a symbolic whole that immediately fuses matter and manner, message and package, argument and ritual. According to Moffit (2016, 37), Pels views the notion of political style as both a positive and a negative thing for politics in democracy. Pels argues that political style can narrow the aesthetic gap in the division between the representatives and the represented as they offer more intimacy through political actors (especially via various media channels). As downside to this, Pels argues that as political style has the ability to strip politics down of its content, it might turn citizen into passive bystanders who contently observe and consume politics from far instead of taking active part in it (Pels 2003, 45).



Pels definition of political style thickens the theoretical work of Ankersmit from a sociological point of view (see Moffit 2016, 36): Pels connect the continuously increasing relevance of political style in contemporary politics to wide changes in the media landscape. Furthermore, Pels (Corner and Pels 2003; Pels and the Velde 2000) points out the trends of increasing coverage that politicians are receiving from the media as well as to the cult of celebrity in the stylization of politics. Pels goes even to the length of giving an example of a political actor who in his own words “understood the power of political style, combining political spectacle and media technologies”: the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn who was already in his time considered a populist and was murdered in 2002. According to Pels (2003, 42), Fortuyn was able to make politics fun by “capitalizing on his personality as a brand, radically blurring the boundaries between private life and public showtime”. By the same token, the success of Fortuyn would never have been possible, had it not been for the widely granted visibility media technologies granted him. In line with Pels, Mazzoleni (2014), Isotalus (2017) and Herkman (2019) underline the so-called two way street between media organizations and politicians who are constantly benefiting of the actions of each other as they cyclically promote one another – these aspects shall be discussed more comprehensively in Chapter 2.

### *1.3.5 Political style in populism by Moffit*

In the view of Moffit (2016, 37) the bridge that links these three authors Hariman, Ankersmit and Pels in regard of political style is their shared acknowledgment that *shallow* elements of political style need to be taken seriously. As Hariman offers an opportunity to classify political styles in the plural, Ankersmit and Pels instead bring the theoretical sophistication to the table which indeed is essential in order to fully capture the implications of political style for contemporary political analysis. Eventually, Moffit (2016, 38) brings them all together by offering a new definition – a widely accepted one – of political style:

“Political style can be understood as the repertoires of embodied, symbolically mediated performance made to audiences that are used to create and navigate the fields of power that comprise the political, stretching from the domain of government through everyday life”

As the focus of the definition by Moffit is on symbolically mediated performance, it takes the approach of *political style* in terms of populism to a completely different direction with respect to the ideational approach. Moffit (2016, 39) underlines that populism does not need to be understood as an ideology to examine it as a political style. He then further develops his idea of *political style* in terms of populism, arguing that there are three key features which constitute his definition of populism as a political style:

1) Is appealing to *the people* versus *the elite*, this is in the very core of the definition. Moffit (2016, 43) explains that *the people* are effectively presented as the true holders of sovereignty and that this appeal to them (the people) can take several various forms such as *the heartland* and *the mainstream* or other similar signifiers which then perform gestures which express the populists predisposition with *the people*.

2) Moffit identifies a feature he refers to as the “bad manners” which is essential to populist style: the idea behind this concept is the way in how populists ride on the moral high ground as well as their use of *common sense* in contrast to the elites (for example professional politicians). The populists do not have to apply the same rules of political correctness in their rhetoric as they are in the end communicating and performing within the frameworks of *appealing to the people*. As a byproduct the style used by populist actors attracts coarse language and a open contempt towards a so called appropriate conduct in a political context. (Moffit 2016, 44).

Canovan (1999, 5) noticed and underlined the same element in the communication of populist actors years before, referring to it as the tabloid style. Indeed, populists on the surface are not exactly well known for their regard to norms or political correctness when it comes to their rhetoric and communication.

3) Feature presented by Moffit (2016, 45) is the one of *Crisis, Breakdown, Threat*. He argues that populists draw a part of their stylistic repertoire from painting a picture of an unavoidable turmoil and crisis in society. These crises can be related to economic unrest, political corruption, social change or immigration and so forth.

Also Taggart (2000) who has emphasized the populist message to contain a certain sort of a longing to the lost *good old times* or a *heartland*, argues that populism gets its momentum from the perception of a crisis. With the above presented three features by Moffit and his definition on *political style*, he offers us his conclusion:

Contemporary populism can be defined as a political style that features an appeal “to the people”, versus “the elite”, bad manners and the performance of crisis, breakdown or threat (Moffit 2016, 45).

In studying and accepting Moffit’s definition of populism as a political style, one is able to evaluate populism by emphasizing its performative elements first and foremost. It offers an outlook to consider the multifaceted relationship that populism as a complicated concept has with ideology, style and content.

As has been briefly mentioned before, there exists a discursive approach towards understanding populism (Laclau 2005; Hawkins 2010), which should however not be mixed with the one of political style. There are nevertheless some overlapping elements which should be mentioned even as the discursive approach per se is not relevant as such for the purposes of this research. In the political style approach which has been unfolded in this chapter and in general largely developed and pioneered by Moffit, the focus on its performative elements contains a number of discursive features, i.e. use of language, written texts, speech itself and so forth. Moffit (2016, 40) however stresses that the political style approach goes way beyond these features, considering the aesthetic and performative elements which the discursive approach practically disregards. The political style approach towards understanding and explaining populism does indeed consider as pivotal elements such as body language, self-presentation, images and staging.

### 1.3.6 Populist communication and its strategies

In the work of De Vreese et. Al (2018), the research team applied Hawkins's (2010) discursive approach and Mudde's (2004) ideational one to define populism as a communication phenomenon. As previously established, the definition of populism as a *political style* by Benjamin Moffit (2016) is overlapping but also complementary to the more modest discourse approach by Hawkins. The three conclusions presented by De Vreese et al. (2018) are worth mentioning in the context of the present chapter:

- 1) Populist ideas must be communicated discursively to achieve the communicator's goals and the intended effects on the audience.
- 2) Populism can be understood as a discursive manifestation of a thin-centered ideology that is not only focused on the underlying "set of basic assumptions about the world" but in particular on "the language that unwittingly expresses them" (Hawkins, Riding, and Mudde 2012: 3).
- 3) Populism can be understood as content and style.

Depending on the use of characteristic content and style features, one can distinguish four different types of populism (Aalberg et al. 2017; Jagers and Walgrave 2007):

- 1) *Complete populism* includes reference and appeals to the people, anti-elitism, and exclusion of out-groups.
- 2) *Excluding populism* includes only references and appeals to the people and exclusion of out-groups.
- 3) *Anti-elitist populism* includes reference and appeals to the people and anti-elitism.
- 4) *Empty populism* includes only reference and appeals to the people.

In populist communication that manifests itself in discourse, three elements are central (Aalberg et al. 2017; Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Kriesi 2014; Mudde 2004):

- 1) Reference to *the people*.
- 2) A battle against the corrupt *elite* and (with a possible extension of):
- 3) The identification of an out-group.

The actual communication strategies by populists have also been the focus of recent research (see Ernst et al. 2017; Hatakka, Niemi & Välimäki 2017) as well as populist communication style (see Bracciale and Martella 2017). Even as these were carried out using various platforms from Twitter to media statements, studies show that the principal concept of “the people” strongly emphasized by populist always emerged. Through communication strategies, populists seek to bring their core idea and main message at the centre of public debate (Ernst et al. 2017, 1349). Ernst et al. divided populist communication strategies into three categories:

- 1) Those that appeal to the people,
- 2) Those that oppose the elite
- 3) Those that emphasize the sovereignty of the people.

Nation-appealing communication strategies seek to showcase the speaker’s closeness to the nation, highlight the nation’s virtues, and praise the nation’s accomplishments. Strategies against the elite blackmail as well as accuse the elite and seek to create the impression of a wide distance existing between the people and the elite. Strategies that emphasize the sovereignty of the people underline the decision-making power of the people and seek to deny the right of the elite to hold on to their power.

According to Bracciale and Martella (2017, 1313), the populist style of communication is constructed from three characteristics: 1) emphasizing the sovereignty of the people, 2) attacking the elite, and 3) isolating outsiders. The third feature refers to a kind of storytelling about the “dangerous others”. The first two characteristics are consistent with the communication strategies of Ernst et al. (2017), but the third adds xenophobia associated with a particular type of populism. As already put forward, xenophobia is undeniably visible in certain types of populism, but it is still relevant to note that not all populist rhetoric is xenophobic.

It is typical for populist actors to take advantage of themes driven by the political mainstream and then to further exploit these in undermining political authority in the society in an attempt to appeal to voters (Fryklund 2018, 40 -

41). As the political cultures of different countries and the priorities of governing parties vary, so does the rhetoric of populist actors depending on the country and region. Moreover, besides appealing to the people, other recurring characteristics can be identified from the rhetoric of various populists: 1) confrontation and simplifications, 2) emotional concentration, 3) apoliticity, and 4) leadership-centeredness. Scholars like Müller (2016), Eatwell and Goodwin (2018), Mudde (2019) and Herkman (2019) also emphasize the leadership-centered nature of populism as well as the embodiment of a charismatic and strong leader.

According to Palonen and Saresma (2017, 40), populist logic progresses by confrontations and simplifications. Populist rhetoric is often black and white and vague at the same time, and it is also characterized by a lack of compromise (Wiberg 2011, 15). To this particular rhetorical style which emphasizes simplification, one can also add the will of populist actors to underline the apolitical nature of what they are saying. As the political power elite is the enemy of the people, populists in their rhetoric are working hard to get rid of this elite. In the populist style, other political actors are criticized and the straightforwardness and determination of one's own actions are emphasized (Bos and Brants 2014, 706).

Wiberg (2011, 18) calls the over-simplification used by populists in their rhetoric as unintelligent and he views that the centre of populist rhetoric contains a communication style that is effectively emotional rather than based on rational argumentation to the point that populism has also been described as a non-political policy (Rosanvallon 2008, 212). Palonen and Saresma (2017, 40) describe populist rhetoric as gaining strength from feelings, and reciprocally generating emotions in the audience. The bond created by the emotional concentration of populism inspires the audiences. This, of course, is not just a prerogative of populist rhetoric, it is arguably a shared emotional experience seen as the goal of most forms of influential communication. Bos and Brants (2014, 706) mention that populist style is characterized by an emotional and exaggerated language that is rich in slogans. This style can even be called linguistic radicalism. Populist rhetoric is also characterized by

glorification of the past (Wiberg 2011, 20), whereby this manifestation of nostalgia is one embodiment of the emotional concentration of populist rhetoric.

Finally, admiration for a strong leadership within populism and populist rhetoric is rather compelling as it essentially calls for all the political decision-making power to be handed over to the people. According to Laclau (2005, 4), populism generally contains this contradictory requirement: ordinary people must have equal opportunities for political participation, but it is associated with the glorification of charismatic leadership, even authoritarianism. This is seen as a typical feature of populism (Gürnhali 2018, 57): the whole movement and its supporters identify under a strong leader.

As noted throughout Chapter 1, when looking at the ideological dimensions of populism, the focus is on elucidating its ontological and moral assumptions about society. Instead, in the rhetoric of populism, these basic assumptions are taken to a practical level in political communication and further linked to the phenomena of the surrounding world. Populist rhetoric then seeks to convince its listeners of society's pure people against the corrupt elite. This effort by populist rhetoric is often combined with a *call to action* - something needs to be done about the situation. From a rhetorical point of view, populism is also associated with other "strong" ideologies, and thus influences how populism is meaningful in the minds of the public. If the people are appealed through xenophobic speech or patriotic anecdotes and narratives, then populism is also associated with such nationalism in people's minds.

When examining populism from the perspective of rhetoric the most essential concept is *the people*, not unlike in the other schools of thought which study populism. As mentioned above, Canovan (1984, 313) states that the only feature that unites all populist actors is a rhetorical style that focuses on appealing to the people. However, it is good to bear in mind that despite her ground-breaking work on populism through the scope of *political style* - Canovan personally regarded populism as a movement. Stanley (2008, 102 - 107) sees that the concept of the people is characterized on the one hand by its

rhetorical usefulness and on the other hand by its conceptual vagueness. The flexibility of the concept of the people helps populist rhetoric, as the criteria for inclusion of people depend on the speaker. It is thus a question of defining who belongs to the people emphasized by the populist and who is excluded from it. With the concept of the people, populist leaders assert that they represent a group of different groups that, despite their differences, share a common idea: the elites have corrupted the people's right for self-determination (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012, 5).



## CHAPTER 2

### MEDIA AND POPULISM

#### *2.1. The Mediatization of politics, populism and social media*

As early as 2003, political scientist Blumler famously stated: “Any future attempt to analyse populism without taking into account... *the media factor* will be severely incomplete” (Blumler 2003, xvi). As a direct response to this opening, Moffit (2016, 94) has encouraged political scientists to “heed Blumler’s warning” and indeed several scholars on populism believe that the media has had a significant impact on the rise of populism and in the increasing popularity of political movements (see Mazzoleni et al. 2003; Mazzoleni 2014; Boomgarden & Vliegenhart 2007; Koopmans & Muis 2009; Bos et. al., 2010; Rooduijn 2014; Herkman 2017).

This argument is firmly related to the wide debate in which the role of the media is considered to have a great and profound impact on politics and society. This phenomenon is called the *mediatization* of politics (Mazzoleni & Schulz 2010) (Herkman 2011, 22-30) and (Isotalus 2017). According to some scholars the mediatized political environment is particularly benefiting for political actors which can be identified as populists as their style is considered *media sexy*: it appeals to the people, it is provoking and the strong confrontational nature of it fits perfectly with the contemporary media logic which lives for news scoops, scandals and is night and day fighting for the attention of the public eye and concentration (Esser & Strömbäk 2014; Moffit & Tormey 2014). This is of course a western perspective over a mediasystem regarding politics. However, it should be borne in mind that within westernized mediasystems differences occur crossnationally. Indeed, Hallin and Mancini (2004) systematised such differences in their renowned work presenting three models of media systems:

1. Mediterranean or polarized pluralist model (France, Greece, Portugal, Italy and Spain);
2. North/Central Europe or Democratic corporatist model (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland);
3. North Atlantic or Liberal model (The United Kingdom, USA, Canada and Ireland)

Each of these models have characteristics which are observed through national differences. Within this research a cross national European perspective is adopted, however, for the reasons which will be further explained in Chapter 3 (3.2) , only countries pertaining two of the above mentioned models (Mediterranean model and North/Central Europe model) are taken into consideration.

Getting back to the mediatization of politics, some scholars connect the concept as a phenomenon within the entire western society, culture and life in general (Krotz 2007; Hjavard 2013; Couldry & Hepp 2016). According to them, mediatization is a kind of metaprocess of modernization – not at all different to globalization, individualization and commercialization – which in their view explains how the media environment has already historically changed and shaped the ways and patterns according to which human beings outline and experience the world around them (Herkman 2019, 122-123).

Indeed, politics is being followed through the media as it was entertainment. The so-called “big personalities” of politics and their famous utterances are familiar all around the globe even to people who might not actively follow politics. Even as the major news headlines of the global media companies might be unfamiliar to the wide public, certainly the faces of Donald Trump from the US, Matteo Salvini and Silvio Berlusconi from Italy, Vladimir Putin from Russia, Kim Jong-un from North Korea, Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage from the UK and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan from Turkey are familiar with almost everyone. The traditional media or *legacy media* can thus be held responsible for this entertainment and personalization of politics as

politicians choose conscious and often successful strategies in order to exploit such media trends (Koivunen 2011, 219).

According to the political communication scholar Strömbäck (2008), there are several different stages and dimension in the mediatization of politics which take place and are realized in some contexts and some in others. Strömbäck argues that first and foremost the media represent the principal source of information regarding politics for the citizens. The second dimension underlines the fact that the media regards itself as an independent actor – not associated with any political institutions. In the third stage, the logic of the media itself starts to determine the content of its broadcast and additionally within the deepest form of mediatization, the media starts to dictate the actions of political organizations and politicians themselves.

This four-stage model of the mediatization of politics is the most accurate in describing western liberal democracies (Herkman 2019). This means that in more authoritarian societies the ruling class has a tight grip on the media systems and organizations. Several scholars seek to underline the fact that politics and the media are always in a nonstop relationship of interaction (Couldy 2008; Strömbäck and Esser 2014, 8). This means that the practices of politics shape simultaneously the practices of the media.

It is important to note that when attempting to understand the relationships between politics and the media – and more precisely: to understand which is at a more dominating or advantageous role over the other – that we are actually discussing two different types of logics and their mutual relationship (see Table 3 below). When the logic of politics is concerned, the main focus is the political institutions, the actual policy making and decision making as well as the attempt to gain as much political power as possible during elections. The logic of the media is defined by the conventions and norms of journalism, the commercial interests as well as the possibilities and limits made possible by information and communication technology (Strömbäck and Esser 2014).

According to Herkman (2019) these logics often collide with each other. News journalism attempts to produce and provide current and topical information in a fashion which is regarded as interesting and relevant both by

the public consumers as well as the potential commercial parties involved in addition to being critical towards the ruling politicians. These premises are without a doubt different to the ones of politics and political actors, where complete transparency does not always serve the purposes of the ruling parties. This tells us that the mediatization of politics is always contextual.

	<b>The frame of action</b>	<b>Purpose in society</b>	<b>The objective</b>
Politics	Political institutions, organization and culture	Execution of politics and decision making	Representative power, public attention
The news media	Journalistic institutions, media markets, news criteria and routines	Distribution of information, the “watchdog of democracy”	The interest of the publics and commercial advertisers, economic profit

*Table 3 The logics of politics and the news media (Strömbäck & Esser 2014, 15-19)*

The media largely determines how political actors appear to the public and voters. The populist rhetoric discussed in Chapter 1 is most often transmitted to the ears of the public and citizens precisely through the media or social media. According to Mazzoleni et al. (2003, 10), *framing* and the *agenda setting* theories suggest that the media has a central influence on people’s thoughts and opinions. Populist rhetoric is always presented in the media through a particular frame and often with some kind of media with its own line of commentary. Whether this perspective or commentary is critical or sympathetic provides the public with some clues as to how rhetoric should be interpreted.

The media thus has an indisputable role as a constructor and framer of political and public reality. In democratic societies, the media can be seen as a legitimizer and naturalizer of the political system. The whole political reality of

society can be seen as the result of issues and deliberations raised by the media, issues that are either highlighted or left unreported. The media creates reality not only for ordinary people, but also for political actors and decision-makers. The media also concretizes political or civil society movements, activists, or events to other politicians who, based on this image, take a stand, and communicate with other actors (Mazzoleni et al. 2003, 10). However, it is good to note that in today's world of social media or *digital media*, political reality is not built solely through the mass media. The individual communication of politicians and other actors in society through various channels also have an enormous impact which we shall discuss later further on.

Political actors, including populists, are constantly involved in a kind of mediated discursive negotiation about their role, image, and acceptability in society (Hatakka et al. 2017, 2). According to Palonen and Saresma (2017, 16), populism is performative, thus, it can be assumed that populist rhetoric always has an imagined or real audience. Traditional media (referred to as *legacy media* from now on) and social media are thus both a platform in which populists seek to convey their message to citizens and an environment in which populist actors are given a meaning.

Actors who are identified as populist also intentionally provoke with their escalating and confronting style, which provides them with plenty of media publicity which they then are able to direct towards the topics they wish (Mazzoleni 2008; Wodak 2015).

Media actors can be positive or against populist actors, and their news can strategically shape what each actor looks like to the public. The power of the media has also been recognized by decision-makers, and therefore in many single-party or single-leadership countries, such as Hungary, Poland or Turkey, efforts are being made to restrict press freedom. Media that portrays and frames those in power in a negative or under an undesirable light may be sought to be restricted by legislation, or their credibility may be undermined in the rhetoric of those in power.

A common rhetorical means of undermining the credibility of a media actor is to accuse him of spreading *fake news* – a term made famous by the

former US president Donald Trump during his attacks on mainstream news media (Amanpour 2016; Dawes 2016). The concept of fake news has inspired a variety of research bridging it with online media platforms (Molina et al. 2019; Giglietto et al. 2019; Chadwick 2021).

As has been discussed above, the media sets the content they present in accordance with the goals of the media industry. Goals affect media practices and actions, and this process can be called “media logic”. The logic of the media is often consistent with the logic of business, and the abundant sensationalism of the news content is a clear response to the demands of market forces. Populist movements are responsive to this media logic, and they know how to take advantage of the sensationalism forced by business. Populism and populist actors can also be seen to have a kind of natural news value. The media cannot ignore things that are of genuine interest to the public, which have news value (Mazzoleni, 2014).

Politicians who break unwritten rules of politics with their rough language and emotionally stirring protests are very interesting to the public and abundant coverage of the actions of populist actors may result in widening the support for populists. The media makes populism visible and provides a national or even global arena for populists to spread their message, in this way, the media in its own way also legitimizes populist movements as worthy actors in society (Mazzoleni et al. 2003, 6, 12).

Moreover, populist communication style can be studied from the perspective of media influence. Politicians want to get their message across to potential voters, and thus fight for visibility in different media spheres (Herkman 2019, 118). Voter courtship also drives politicians to speak the language of voters in a popular way. Exploiting the media to increase the coverage of one’s own message is by no means the exclusive prerogative of populist politicians. According to Mazzoleni et al. (2003, 12), politicians employ both direct and indirect strategies to ensure media visibility. According to the logic of the media, the political figures which are considered interesting can rely on a kind of an automatic media visibility. Populist leaders are thus

enjoying special media attention, and they typically know how to take advantage of this free visibility with their witty and controversial statements.

The relationship between populism and populist actors with mediatization is anything but straightforward. On the other hand, populists thrive and flourish through media publicity; their policies gain attention, momentum and support when they are being covered. Then again especially in liberal democracies the news media has traditionally been rather critical towards populist policies and actors as they often are seen to be in conflict with the journalistic ideals and fundamental values of western liberal democracy (Herkman 2016; Hatakka 2018, Mudde 2019). For the purposes of this research, it is thus interesting to observe how well populism and populists are doing in many western democracies despite the mainstream media's approach towards them.

Media houses fight for their consumers and attract readers and viewers by making politics easy to digest, and overall news about politics are portrayed in a popular way. When dealing with politics in a spectacularizing way, mixing information and entertainment, the media itself becomes populist. At the same time, political actors are taking advantage of this political entertainment news and adopting a communication style and language that suits the demands of the media (Bracciale and Martella 2017; Mazzoleni 2008). Indeed, the most talked about political news topics often include an issue related to the privacy or personality of a particular individual politician. Often the customer-centered statements by politicians will remain in people's minds if they contain some clever wordplay or a memorable metaphor.

According to Mazzoleni et al. (2003, 8), there are usually two types of media in democracies: the *elite media* and the *popular media*. The elite media follows the status quo of the society, and strives to present itself as an impartial, responsible, and fair news media. Therefore, repetition of populist messages is less likely for elite media. Popular media focus more on the personalities of politicians, their entertainment value, conflicts, and on light speculation rather than in-depth analysis. Indeed, populist voices are more likely to emerge in popular media. This transformation of the media into populist is a danger (or an opportunity) for popular media.

In the self-understanding of populism, the media have often been portrayed as a part of the “corrupt elite” and not “the people” as has been widely discussed in Chapter 1. When the traditional news media takes a critical stance, populists often turn this to their advantage as a justification and proof for their narrative of being against “the elites” and for “the people”. Rather paradoxically, this unites the lines of the populists (Moffit 2016; Herkman 2019). It is relevant to point out that traditional media are conjoined in several ways to the process of self-understanding of populism and populists, therefore the connection between the media and populism is unquestionable.

The mere presence of modern-day populism rises questions and issues about the mediatization of politics as we look at how the media itself has been determined. The whole discussion and debate about mediatization have been developed and had under the so called “rule” of traditional media and mass communication (Moffit 2016; Isotalus 2017; Hatakka 2018; Herkman 2019). According to this debate, the essential actor in politics is the media logic tied to the institutions and commercial interests of mass media and journalism as has been discussed earlier in this chapter (see Strömback and Esser 2014). This is not to disregard the fact that everyday party politics would not still be very tied to the mainstream news media of today, but the recent developments of the media landscape have reshaped the relationship of politics and media for good (Isotalus 2017).

Today we live in a convergence culture (Jenkins 2006) or a hybrid media system (Chadwick 2013), where legacy media is intertwined with entertaining media formats, social media platforms and online environments in numerous ways. According to Herkman (2019) these changes have produced unseen new possibilities to the world of politics, as the legacy media cannot alone stand as the ultimate gate keeper of public information and its distribution. This will be discussed further on in section 2.3 of this chapter.

From an academically attainable point of view, it is relevant to point out that populism as a political phenomenon underlines the mediatization of politics mainly as an element surfacing in western liberal democracies, strongly relying on representative and constitutional democracy. However,



populism and populist actors are also present in societies with different forms of democracy which have both political and media systems that vary from each other on a wide scale. According to Kivikuru and Pietiläinen (2014), several East-European former socialist countries, such as Turkey, Russia, parts of Latin America, Asia and even Africa, are considerably different to our conceptions of liberal democracy and yet populism and populist actors have emerged from all these locations in one form or another.

## *2.2. Media populism*

According to Herkman (2019, 128) the commercial media houses are often regarded to have populist attributes in their own behaviour or that they indeed are seen as populist. Scholars such as Krämer (2014, 42) and Mazzoleni (2014, 47-48) use the word media populism in order to describe this phenomenon and they have in fact coined the term. According to Mazzoleni (2008), there is a never-ending adaptation of politically flavoured public performances, language and occasionally policy-making in order to meet the demands of a commercialized mass media which is continuously increasing. He further notes that the mediatization of political communication is often seen alongside with the marketization of all the public representations of everyday politics. Herkman (2019) explains that in media populism we witness a chain of events where media houses are attempting to sell themselves to the public as well as to commercial advertising partners and are using “populistic” means in order to meet this end. For example, media houses never miss on an opportunity to create dramatic events by presenting hostile confrontations in their stories: they might emphasize a “down to earth” point of view instead of presenting the opinions of professionals and the so-called “elites” and frequently emphasize well-known personalities or just crackling characters to shift the focus from the actual news and the information which is being broadcasted. The media also tends to refer to moral stances as that rises curiosity and it prompts emotions within the consumers (Herkman 2019, 128).

From this point of view in relation to the literature on populism in Chapter 1, it is relevant to observe the similarities of media houses and populist political actors since both emphasize a higher ground on moral issues and societally morally acceptable behaviour (Taggart 2000; Müller 2016; Moffit 2016) even as the base of such communication derives from a different kind of ambition, the media houses going for higher ratings and populists for exposure and political power.

Media populism can thus be regarded in the ways that the media seems to stand and speak up for the people against the real or imagined immoral actions of the political elites (Plasser and Ulram, 2003) or how they define themselves as the ones being “the voice of the people” (Krämen, 2014). Hatakka (2019, 37-38) makes a point by stating that also other scholars such as Moffit (2016) have emphasized the complicit part of the media in the way they further spread populist ideas and bridge these to the notion of how the populist style interpenetrates the commercial media logic as has been suggested by Mazzoleni (2008).

The similarities between media houses and populist actors are actual when observing how the media strives to get higher ratings, advertising partnerships, shocking headlines and scandals in a fashion which appeals to the emotional side of the public - not unlike the populist style discussed in Chapter 1. Hatakka (2018) notes that the populist logic fits well the commercial interests of media logic. Thus, it can be stated that populism and populists produce drama into politics – something that the media houses long for.

A crucially popular example of the media logic intertwining with the populist logic is surely Donald Trump, the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States and regarded – if not a populist by definition – at least a political actor who used populist rhetoric. According to Borchers (2016), the several provocations and public scandals of Donald Trump the candidate and president, lifted the previously falling news media rating curves up as well as increased the interest of commercial advertisers.

Another dimension in media populism is the way how the media embraces and adopts the talking points of populists and even paves way to their policies

(Herkman 2019, 129). Especially the tabloid media houses or scandal journalism have been seen as an essential part of media populism as it is regarded as anti-elitist and common (Fiske 1992; Isotalus 2017). The term tabloid media refers to entertainment-driven newspaper journalism, but it applies just as well to television or radio shows as to any online content, which emphasizes entertainment over information in their broadcasting (Sparks 2000; Ashton & Feasey, 2013).

Herkman (2017) points out that some analyses have proven that the tabloid media prefers or at least is more eager to prompt the views and policies of populist leaders unlike so called serious journalism. On the other hand, Mazzoleni (2014, 51) has made the same discovery even as he underlines that there are significant cross-cultural differences in how the tabloid media covers populists. Under this light it is noteworthy to bear in mind what for example Akkerman (2011) and Kovala et al. (2018) have stated about the issue, underlying that the media houses in general tackle and furthermore cover politics from a personal perspective regardless of the fact whether a politician or a political movement is populist or not.

In western democracies, the relationship between the journalistic media and populism is not entirely simple: on the one hand, the media houses use populist politician to fuel their newsfeed in order to increase ratings as well as providing a spotlight to populists themselves; on the other hand, the moral ideals of journalism and free speech are in contrast with populism. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, the ideals and actions behind populist policies are often in favour of a rather narrow interpretation of what to them constitutes “the people” (“us”- “the people” vs. “them” – not the people). That populist vision with its including and excluding narrative is of course in a drastic contrast with the ideals of the liberal journalistic media, which seeks to defend free speech, democracy, human rights and equality (Hanitzch and Wahl-Jorgensen 2009; Isotalus 2017).

This clash between the media and populism does not however mean that either actor would suffer in terms of popularity. On the contrary, according to Herkman (2019, 130) both the media and populist actors might increase the

public perception of them to their favour. As has been established before, the so-called political drama that populist actors often provide to the political scene is something which interests the public and thus the media houses. In western liberal democracies populists themselves often tend to regard the media as part of the elites as has been discussed in Chapter 1. It is then only natural for several populist actors to enforce the narrative of “us vs. them” by regarding the media as elite and corrupt and thus building their own political identities to communicate it further to their supporters.

According to Mazzoleni et al. (2003) as well as Niemi and Houni (2018), populist leaders often portray themselves as the victims of the elites and media – the media being a part of the elites. In this way, they aim to raise sympathy, anger and support from their supporters. In the views of Walgrave and De Swert (2004) as well as Railo and Välimäki (2012) and Hatakka (2018) political themes which are considered essential from the point of view of populist actors are crime, immigration and the corruption of the elites. As a result, populist politicians and their policies receive most attention in the media when these topics are on the table – when this happens, populists have an opportunity to portray themselves as the unchallenged experts on these policy issues. According to Herkman (2019, 131), this is opposite to other situations where politics and policy are being discussed as populists often have to be the ones challenging the established experts.

Several scholars (Stewart and Horsfield, 2003; Mazzoleni 2014; Wodak 2015) stated that some populist actors seek deliberately to utilize the “sensitivity” of the news media by provoking the stages of political discourse. The logic behind this behaviour is to gain momentum and a maximum amount of attention for their political agenda. According to Wodak (2015, 19-20), a scholar of discourse analysis, there exists a “right-wing populist perpetuum mobile” which refers to potential actions by a populist actor feeding provocations to the media houses which then pick them up for broadcasting and publication. In this fashion, populist actors are able to set the agenda by their chosen topics in the media.

In the views of Niemi and Houni (2018) journalists are thus torn as they have to assess how to regard the provocations made by populist actors. On the other hand, news journalists should report topical and interesting policy issues, but simultaneously they have to be aware of their responsibility to protect the basic principles of liberal western democracies. Herkman (2019) points out that the tension between populism and media populism manifests itself in its clearest form when political scandals are concerned. Populist actors benefit both from the political scandals of the mainstream politicians as well as of those concerning populist themselves as they ultimately ensure their visibility in the news.

In general, it is noteworthy to mention that political scandals do not provoke long lasting damages to the support for political parties – whether or not they are populist (Jenssen and Fladmoe 2012). With reference to Chapter 1 where we discussed the populist narrative prompted by populists themselves as the “underdogs who fight the corrupt elites in the name of the people”, it is interesting to note that populist parties might in fact benefit from a political scandal as their supporters often regard the scandals as political witch-hunt by the corrupt elites which the media is a part of (Herkman 2019).

The role of the news media in relation to populism is undeniable as has been established. In their research on European right wing populist parties and their media relations from 2003, Mazzoleni et al. created the *life cycle model* which demonstrates the role of the news media in the rising the popularity of populist parties. Even as the model has been criticized for its obvious limitations – mostly for the view that all political populist parties are short term shooting star phenomena which eventually fade out –, it does demonstrate the fundamental relation which populism and the media share. Indeed more recent research conducted by Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008), Hatakka (2018) and Palonen (2020) have found that numerous contemporary populist actors are resilient and long lasting. It can be stated that the wider issue with the *life cycle model* lies more on the fact that it has been built on the observation of populism from the standpoint of legacy media – something similar to theorizing the mediatization of politics.

The media landscape has changed fundamentally and the convergence culture (Jenkins 2006) or the hybrid media system (Chadwick 2013) where the traditional legacy media are interconnected to entertaining media formats, social media platforms and online environments in numerous ways, bring elements to the relation between populism and the media which cannot be observed and studied only through the perhaps outdated rules of the media landscape dominated by the legacy media.

According to Hatakka (2019), Herkman (2019) and Mudde (2019), the right-wing populist self-understanding takes shape, changes form and gets stronger largely through platforms like the online forums of social media, which are alien to the actions of the legacy media or even act as a counterreaction to them. The online environment becomes a fundamental variable in the relation of populism and the media, which affects both and can either balance or accelerate the legacy media's journalistic broadcasting on the populist movement. For this reason, it is essential to take into consideration the role of the social media, not only for the purposes of this research, but also in general when discussing populism or the mediatization of politics.

### *2.3. Populism within the social media and the hybrid media system*

According to Moffit (2018) social media has fundamentally shaped the landscape of political communication as it also offers many political opportunities to populist actors. In addition, recent research by Sintes-Olivella et al. (2020) underline that communication is indeed one of the core elements of populism – especially within the context of social media.

Populist actors do not need to rely on the legacy media in order to get their message out as they do not need to worry about the geographical limitations; populist actors – like other political actors in general – have the possibility to circumvent the legacy media by simply contacting their audiences directly (and in reverse) through the channels of social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Youtube (Moffit 2018, 88). Through these digital platforms, populist political leaders can directly communicate with citizens and build up

their political leadership as well as their political discourse (Sintes-Olivella et al. 2020). Indeed, several newcomer actors in the populist scene have successfully used the Internet and the so-called new media as a fundamental instrument in order to politically mobilize and organize (Moffit 2018, 89).

One of the most principal theories regarding media and contemporary politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been the “Hybrid media system” by Chadwick (2013; 2017). The main attribute of this theory is that in the hybrid media system, the spread and circulation of all information takes place in multiple publics at multiple times and it is done by multiple actors with multiple voices. This take has also been supported in the work of Hepp and Couldry (2010, 9). In the today’s hybrid media system the pre-web and post-web logics of the media compete and simultaneously complement each other (Chadwick 2013; 207).

Chadwick’s vision of the hybridity of the media system questions the classic idea of media logic by Altheide and Snow (1979), which famously argued that there is only one dominant logic within mass media which influences how and when politics turn into a public affair. According to Klinger and Svensson (2015), the way how professional journalistic news actors operate in the legacy media compete with the network logic that characterizes the social media.

In the pre-digital mass media era, traditional news journalists in the legacy media were often considered as the gate keepers whereas the consumers of the news – citizens – were viewed as a rather passive audience. This has drastically changed as today every citizen, consumer of the media is also able to produce, reproduce and circulate news and they start to function as a peer network (Klinger and Svenson, 2015). In other words, in the post web-environment or the hybrid media system, any citizen can take an active role online and thus communicate directly with and to professional legacy media, political and populist actors.

In his theory Chadwick (2011; 2013) argues that the hybridity of the media system supplies any actors with an individual voice and means of producing, circulating and eventually even reframing any shape of information, thus

reconfiguring the flow of politically essential information in the society. Hatakka (2019, 49) states that Chadwick's view on the hybridity of the media system offers us a holistic understanding of the media as an entity. Chadwick does not merely focus on how online technology is being used in political campaigns, but he additionally suggests that attention should be paid to how the everyday politico-cultural executions are being operated as far as technology is concerned and how it is recessed. The focus of political studies and populism within the hybrid media system should thus be the studying of how the multiple actors and logics of politics and media interact within one and other, whatever their character or platform of mediation might be.

Chadwick sees that the hybridity of the media system has brought elements of non-linearity and chaos to political communication as power is plural, fragmented and dispersed (Chadwick 2013, 210). As mentioned earlier, the internet as well as the emergence of the recent web culture based largely on social interaction have welcomed parallel public spheres which are partly independent from more traditional gatekeepers represented by professional legacy media. According to Hatakka (2019, 49), these online audiences have cemented their position as a natural aspect of the political public sphere by integrating the controlled online actions of ordinary citizens and politicians with traditional journalistic production and spreading of news.

In the views of Chadwick (2013) and Herkman (2019), the more traditional political news cycle has been reshaped into a "so-called political information cycle" in which the "normal" or "everyday" users who are being perceived as the non-elites now have a more concrete and equal opportunity to take action and participate in the public discourse on political and societal matters through the means of communication technology. Hatakka (2019, 50) states that social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook enable citizens, fringe politicians and activists to take a more active part in what he calls "the mediation and ideological articulation of different policy alternatives within the political communities they are surrounded by".

As this research concentrates on populism through political communication and the media which plays a central role in the debate on



whether populism is a threat to democracy (see Chapter 1), it is essential to point out Chadwick's views about the consequences of the hybridization of the media system on democracy. He regards the effects under an optimistic light as he argues that a media system which is more horizontal has the possibility of being "more expansive and inclusive than the ones which prevailed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (Chadwick 2013, 210). Isotalus (2017) too stresses how the unlimited opportunities of the new media landscape have made the spreading and producing of information more egalitarian.

These views are certainly valuable and shareable, still one has to consider the fact that we do not yet have a deeper knowledge and understanding of how inclusivity and horizontality actually manifest themselves, of how populism as a concept emerges from the legacy media and digital media, especially at the cross-cultural European level which this research tackles. Therefore, it is essential to look at the actual definition of the hybrid media system by Chadwick:

The hybrid media system is built upon interactions among older and newer media logics – where logics are defined as technologies, genres, norms, behaviours, and organisational forms – in the reflexively connected fields of media and politics. Actors in this system are articulated by complex and ever- evolving relationships based upon adaptation and interdependence and simultaneous concentrations and diffusions of power. Actors create, tap, or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals and in ways that modify, enable, or disable others' agency, across and between a range of older and newer media settings. (...) Hybrid thinking thus provides a useful disposition for studying how political actors, publics, and media of all kinds interact. (Chadwick 2013, 5)

Thus, as a concept, the hybrid media system emphasizes the ongoing process where online communication integrates with legacy media and on the discursive interconnection between multiple actors engaged in the communicational structure. Herkman (2019, 142) sums up the idea of the hybrid media system as an environment where political news circulate from the legacy media to the digital media and vice versa. According to Hatakka (2019, 50), all the efforts striving to explain how populism and populist actors operate in the present-day media environment must seek to go further than only

observing the characteristics of populist online rhetoric, populist online movements and the stylistically or ideologically based contents of populist communication.

As Chadwick (2013) suggests, what is essential in the hybrid media system is the mediated interconnectedness of different actors' public actions participating in or/and reacting to populist communication. As I investigate how the media system's hybridization contributes to how populism as a concept emerges from both the legacy media and digital media, I will further focus on how populist communication is being produced, circulated and reacted to in my data (see Chapter 3). This focus will not be exclusively on the online audiences but on the wider scope of the media system where politicians, journalists, citizens and NGO's interact with populist communication.

Vaccari and Valeriani (2016) suggest that online audiences can deepen and broaden party-related engagement by providing new channels for party members to provide feedback, resources, and support and by enabling involvement for individuals who are not party members (Vaccari and Valeriani, 2016, 295).

### *2.3.1. The logic of social media and populism, and a look at Twitter*

According to Zappavigna (2012), Dijck and Poell (2013), Moffit (2016), Isotalus (2017) and Herkman (2019) the logic of social media is fundamentally based on the attempt to create connections and to the pursuit of popularity. The often deliberately provoking statements by populist actors while pursuing division between "the people" and "the elites" is being pursued has been a particularly successful strategy for the populists in order to gain a communal feeling within their supporters (Sakki and Peterson 2016; Moffit 2016; Krämer 2017). The algorithms operating behind the social media applications possibly play a role as far as "political bubbling" is being concerned as the algorithms keep suggesting one sided, like-minded – and possibly biased – information sources to the social media users (Herkman 2019, 144). However, it is as likely that radical views portrayed on an online platform might engage with a more

moderate one even as the online community is formed by and for people who are supposed to share more or less similar views (Hatakka 2017).

According to relatively recent studies, social media can be utilized in a populist manner at least in five different ways (Engesser et al. 2017):

1. Through social media it is easy to form an image of national sovereignty
2. Through social media anyone – any actor, any user – can portray themselves as the spokesperson for the *real people* and/or *the forgotten people*
3. Through social media it is relatively easy to build online campaign against any form of an identified *elite*. It is not relevant whether the campaign is based on economic, juridical or political grounds as it will regardless of the substance find its way to online publics which will support the cause
4. Through social media it is possible to identify and attack a group of people or institutions which are considered bad or not part of *the people*
5. In regard to number 4, it is easy to build a sense of belonging inside a closed online community for example by emphasizing the elements of a shared past, the lost *happy place* and the *heartland*.

All five points listed above resonate fundamentally with the research literature on populism which has been discussed in Chapter 1. In addition, according to comparative research conducted in western liberal democracies where social media behaviour was bridged with populist one, the opposing of the elites and the portraying as a spokesperson for “the people” were the most frequent findings (Ernst et al. 2017; Niemi 2013).

As the logics of politics and the news media (Strömbäck and Esser 2014) have been discussed in the previous section it is fundamental for the purposes of this research to also present a brief overview on the logic of populism and social media in order to offer a comparative angle.

	<b>Frame of the Action</b>	<b>Core of the action</b>	<b>Purpose of the action</b>
<b>Populism</b>	Civil society, political organisation	Antagonistic identity construction,	Power gain, challenging the hegemony

		politicization	
<b>Social media</b>	Internet, social media community platforms	Online communication, affective experiences	Gaining attention, establishing connections

Table 4. *The logics of populism and social media (Herkman 2019, 144)*

### 2.3.2 Twitter

Twitter is one of the most globally used social media, a microblogging and social networking service and since its launch in 2006 up until 2021 it has over 396 million active users worldwide (Twitter 2021). Twitter requires its users to register for the service by creating a free *user profile* to which they can attach images and information about themselves – if they wish. These private profiles log in to the service and allow users to connect with other users. Through these *user profiles*, the Twitter users can create, maintain or dissolve contacts with other people with *user profiles*. In most cases these *user profiles* are created by private individuals, or individual people (with or without a public image or persona), but organizations, associations and firms can also create their own brand profiles on Twitter (Twitter 2021).

The messages written on Twitter by its users are called *tweets* and as of 2017 one tweet can consist of 280 characters whereas the number of characters was limited to 140. These tweets when tweeted are visible and saved on the profile of each individual user and they are directed to the followers of each *user profile*. All the tweets tweeted by any *user profile* are saved and visible on the profile in a chronological order.

As a user begins to follow other users, also the tweets they send will appear in the news feed of the other user. The process of following another user is however not automatically reciprocal as users do not have to follow the other user back and thus become their followers – each user can decide for themselves which other user to follow or not to (Larsson and Moe 2011, 731).

According to Zappavigna (2012), an essential characteristic of the social web in general is how it responds to time. Most often all social media content is chronologically displayed and various commentators describe the emergence of a “real time web” which is a paradigm whereby web content is streamed to other users through syndication (Zappavigna 2012, 4).

Twitter offers several different opportunities in terms of how to communicate between users. One of the most basic functions of Twitter alongside with sending tweets, is the mentioning or tagging of another Twitter-user using the keyboard symbol: @. In addition, users can retweet a tweet originally composed by another user, they can use hashtags (topic tags) in their tweets and pressing the like-button in order to like a tweet by another user. Tweets that are tweeted using a certain topic related hashtags can be then followed centrally further on: all tweets using a certain identical hashtag will be gathered under one category (for example #elections2021).

Twitter interactions are often characterized by speed, immediacy and timeliness as Twitter sends short and often current messages about topical events and issues. Indeed, the use of Twitter is often associated with an ongoing event that is reported or commented on in real time on Twitter. Sharing information and news on Twitter, political satire and humour has been seen as an interconnecting mix of elements especially in the context of political communication particularly in televised election debates. Political stances and values are being communicated further by political actors with the usage of humour and it seems that humour and wit are profitable in political argumentation (Freelon and Karpf 2015).

Typical features of Twitter include emphasizing the importance of the sender, i.e. the personalization of the message, the importance of creating networks, a quick “here-and-now” response and creating impressions (Vainikka and Huhtamäki 2015). It has been speculated that Twitter is indeed being more for advertising- and reputation building-purposes, while other social networking applications such as Facebook is being used more for social activities such as mutual information sharing (Syn and Oh 2015).

The Twitter application consists of an interface that enables its users to create and post new tweets, configure various settings like privacy, search historical tweets in a chronological order and manage their list of followers by following them, unfollowing or even blocking (Zappavigna 2012, 4).

For the purposes of this research, it is instrumental to look at Jacobs and Spierings' (2019) classification of Twitter's most relevant attributes and logic. They outline them as follows:

1. Twitter allows for unmediated communication (Klinger & Svensson 2015, 1248), whereas in traditional media, journalists ignore or filter, edit and frame content. Twitter thus also facilitates politicians "hearing the voice of the people" (Katz, Barris, & Jain 2013, 13). Indeed, "lay person" and "amateur" content is at the heart of social media (Klinger & Svensson 2015, 1246).
2. Twitter is cheap and easy to use as it does not require specialist technical knowledge (Jacobs & Spierings 2016, 21). This implies that it reduces the power of the party leadership, as even backbenchers with limited technical or financial means can use Twitter as their own press agency and build a personal power base.
3. Like other social media, Twitter is built on engagement (Klinger & Svensson, 2015). Most importantly, this can be achieved by drawing someone into a conversation using @-mentions, by replying to somebody's tweets, or by retweeting. Twitter thus enables direct interaction and dialogue between politicians and members of the public (Tromble 2016, 1).
4. Twitter is characterized by speed and virality (Jacobs & Spierings 2016, 22). Messages can go viral within minutes, potentially triggering spillover effects to traditional media. This can also be a negative whereby gaffes, spelling errors, or slips of the tongue go viral.

Twitter or rather tweets by political populist actors will be the object of analysis of Chapters 4 and 5 of the present study, hence this short review of Twitter both as a social media and in the context of political communication. Particular relevance will be given to the comparison between populist identity reporting and building on Twitter and by the legacy media. Indeed, it is important to underline the use of Twitter data that these work makes: Twitter is crucially seen as a tool used by populist actors to communicate to the outer world, be it their supporters or haters, in other words it is the arena in which

these figures talk through their own voice and not by being reported about by someone else (typically other media within the hybrid media system).

## CHAPTER 3

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### *3.1. Objective*

The objective of this research is to describe and explain populist actors and populism as a concept and their representation on social and legacy media during the European parliament elections 2019 in Finland, Italy and The Netherlands.

In this chapter, the three research questions posed in order to achieve the objective of the research are presented after which a closer look to the collected data and the rationale for it will be discussed. After this the two theoretical methodological frameworks - discourse analysis and corpus linguistics – will be presented and the two essential concepts of analysis in the field of phraseology: collocation and discourse prosody shall be exhibited. Only after these starting points and definitions the theoretical methodological framework, a corpus-based discourse study that utilizes the various theoretical starting points, methods, and concepts presented above will be discussed in terms of the posed research questions and the method of analysis. At the very end of this chapter, the hypotheses of this research are presented.

#### *3.1.1. Research questions*

In order to achieve the objective of this study, which is to describe and explain populist actors and populism as a concept and their representation on social and legacy media during the European parliament elections 2019 in Finland, Italy and The Netherlands, I have posed three research questions:



1. How are populism and populist actors represented in Legacy Media vs. Digital Media?

This research question investigates the representation of populism and populist actors on legacy media vs. the representation of populism and populist actors on digital media (social media). As academic literature and public discourse confirm populism is considered, even today, a very controversial phenomenon and a slippery concept (Taggart 2000; Mudde 2004; Laclau 2005; Müller 2016; Moffit 2018; Herkman; 2019).

Considering the nature of populism and the media, it will be relevant in terms of the exploration of how populism is indeed represented within different media arenas, as was presented also in Chapter 2. This research question aims to give us in-depth knowledge to a better understanding of relationships and power balances between different actors in the public sphere, the dynamics of influence and connections between different media arenas as well as detecting patterns of legitimization or delegitimization of political actors.

The essence of a convergence culture (Jenkins 2006) or a hybrid media system (Chadwick 2013), where legacy media is intertwined with entertaining media formats, social media platforms and online environments in numerous ways, also abides by the idea of a hybrid media system (Herkman 2019, 142) as an environment where political news circulates from the legacy media to the digital media and vice versa. For instance, according to Bobba (2021, 4) populists, more than other politicians are said to benefit more from the new digital environment. At the same time, with the social media, populist actors are said to be able to conquer the gatekeeping of the legacy media: by implying both solving their issue of visibility in the public debate (Mazzoleni 2003, 2008) as well as having a new effective instrument of political organization and mobilization (Bobba 2021, 5).

Another vista suggests that the representation of populist attitudes in Legacy Media vs Digital Media leave a mark on people's online news consumption (Stier et al 2021). However, they also state that the evidence for

this phenomenon is very much dependent on the configuration of a country's media system. This means for instance that citizens holding populist attitudes tend to visit less websites from the legacy press while consuming more hyperpartisan news - sharply polarized by political parties in fierce disagreement with each other. Still, citizens supporting populist parties or politicians still primarily favor their news from established sources.

Hence, the investigation of this first research question will provide us exhaustive knowledge and answers to the representation of populism and populist actors represented in Legacy Media vs. Digital Media.

## 2. How are the populist actors representing themselves and their policies on Twitter (digital media)?

This research question examines the relation between populist actors (politicians) on Twitter in relation to populism as a concept. The focus of this research question is on how populist political actors themselves use Twitter in order to represent themselves and their policies. According to Palonen populism gets its content when it becomes entangled with other things (Palonen, 2018, 4). Thus, it will be relevant to investigate how the populists' use of social media to present themselves and their policies might be influenced by the representation by other actors in legacy and digital media. The logic of social media gives the populists more freedom (Engesser et al. 2017, 1123; Jacobs and Spierings 2019).

Sengales et al (2021) argue that the representations of populism constructed by Salvini appear to be characterized in general by elements of radicality and polarization, which are expressed through the language of feelings evoked from the appellative "friends" used to speak to one's own people. They point out that Salvini's representations of populism show a clear reference to a charismatic and personalized leadership that is expressed through a preference for the pronominal form "I". The

representations of populism outlined by Di Maio, on the other hand, highlight a strong ingroup / outgroup differentiation, evoked in the use of the pronominal forms we-our / they-their-them. As for the representations of populism, and their temporal focus on the present, Sengales et al observed both Di Maio and Salvini's representation are consistent with the populist thin ideology, entirely flattened on the "here and now," a present to be contrasted without an overall prospective view of social change (2021: 26).

Mendonca and Dua Caetano (2020) discussed the self-representation of Bolsonaro, which is demonstrated by eccentricity and unsophistication, which makes his demeanor, body, and appropriation of institutional power function as a series of parodies. His performance is said to amplify the transgressive aspect of populism, producing a bemused and entertaining ambiguity toward the figure of the leader.

Yet another study (van der Pas et al 2013), on exploring the relationship between Geert Wilders' leadership performance in the media and his electoral success displayed a compelling positive effect of vision on media attention, and a negative effect of popularity in the ballots on visibility in the media. However, van der Pas et al (2013) acknowledge their study found little support for the leadership hypothesis, and therefore added to literature showing that the effects of the representation of political leaders in the media are more limited than often assumed.

As can be observed, this research question on populist actors' representation in the social media is salient to pursue, can yield many various results and will deepen our knowledge of the representation of the populist actors and their policies on Twitter.

3. What differences or similarities arise from the datasets of each country: Finland, Italy and The Netherlands, in terms of the concept of populism and populist actors in the hybrid media system?

This research question is based on the results that derive from the analysis established of research questions 1 and 2, respectively handling the populism and populist actors representation in Legacy Media vs. Digital Media, and the populist actors representing themselves and their policies on Twitter. Moreover, this research question will, in addition, be mirrored against the contextual elements, which derive from the research literature exhibited in Chapters 1 and 2. In particular, Discourse Analysis will be used to answer this research question as this methodology allows us to emphasise the context of each particular situation.

The dissemination of populist communication and its widespread appeal cannot be fully understood unless investigated in a comparative context. Indeed, “not only *including* but *focusing* on the communicative aspects of populism will help us to better understand one of the hallmarks of contemporary politics” (Aalberg et al. 2017), as the form, visibility, and success of populism varies considerably across cultures although populism has been found to be a global phenomenon common to most democratic countries (Kaltwasser et al. 2017). Many contextual factors determine the amount of populist communication adopted by political actors, media actors, and citizens. Only comparative analysis can reveal and explain similarities and differences in the communicative aspects of populism across countries (De Vreese et al. 2018).

Then again, considering that digital media contributed to the rise and evolution of populism in the last decades, this also presents some challenges. Bobba (2022) argues that the digital frontier is affecting populism. She states that in recent years populists have been using impending instant messaging platforms, like TikTok in the case of Salvini in Italy. Considering the technological development of populism, so Bobba (2022) it has been shown that populists have gained from the use of bots and trolls on social media (e.g. Golovchenko et al. 2020; Jamieson 2018) and of the implementation of new potential tools to manipulate messages and create information disorder in the near future. Hereto comes that the construction and perception of political

reality in contemporary democracies is seen a serious concern. This means that, as populists are particularly inclined to the spread of fake news it also poses problems in relation to the question of the ever-thinning barriers between what is factual, plausible or false, both within the public debate and from the perspective of the individual (Bobba 2022).

This train of thought is an incentive to not merely look at similarities and differences between the three countries presented but also to look beyond, i.e. in what ways populist actors in different democracies use and misuse digital instant platforms, how they handle technological development, and deal with the manipulation and creation of information disorder.

I expect that with the core of these insights and the investigation of this third question will provide exhaustive knowledge, will deepen understanding, and will generate similar, different and new answers on how the concept of populism and populist actors in the hybrid media is different or similar in the three proposed countries.

### *3.2 The data and methodology*

The data of this research consists of data collected from legacy media (newspaper articles) and digital media (Twitter tweets) from three different countries: Finland, Italy and The Netherlands during the same exact time period: 1-31.5.2019 in the context of the European Union elections of that same year.

The Twitter data has been collected by the candidate and additional senior scholars working on the Whirl of Knowledge project (see Chapter 3.2.1). As a partner of this project, I have had access to the database and the permission to use it in this research project with the understanding that the reference to the collectors of the data is been made clear. This permission has been granted by the project leader professor Emilia Palonen of the University of Helsinki. The

data has been gathered and the gathering is organized at the University of Helsinki, Faculty of Social Sciences by Dr. Laura Sibinescu.

I have personally contributed to this classification and categorization of the data in terms of the tweets collected from Finland and The Netherlands. I had broad and detailed conversations regarding the Italian dataset and its categorization both in person and online with the two professors who downloaded and categorized the Italian Twitter data: professors Dario Quattromani from the Tuscia University and Roberto De Rosa from the Niccolò Cusano University in Rome.

The digital media data is gathered from Twitter based on a particular hashtag (#europeanelections2019) during the period of 1-31 of May 2019 from all the EU member states. From all countries the keywords/hashtag for downloading was #europeanelections2019 and additionally:

*For Finland: #euvaalit, #euvaalit2019 and #EUvaalit2019.*

*For Italy: #elezionieuropee2019 and #elezionieu2019 and for*

*The Netherlands: #europeeseverkiezingen2019 and #euverkiezingen2019.*

The total amount of downloaded tweets exceeds the number of categorized ones. For example, from Italy there were all together about 25000 tweets downloaded out which 15 000 have been categorized. In case of Finland and the Netherlands the number is 5000.

The tweets of selected populist politicians that were downloaded to the corpus are the following:

Name/Username **Finland**

1. Jussi Halla-aho/ @Halla\_aho
2. Laura Huhtasaari/@LauraHuhtasaari
3. Jani Mäkelä/@JaniMakelaFi
4. Ville Tavio/@VilleTavio
5. Sebastian Tynkkynen/@SebastianTyne
6. Perussuomalaiset /@persut

Name/Username **The Netherlands**

1. Geert Wilders/@geertwilderspvv
2. Marjolein Faber/ @pvvfaber

3. Marcel de Graaff/ @MJRLdeGraaff
4. Thierry Baudet/ @thierrybaudet
5. ForumVoorDemocratie/ @fvdemocratie

Name/Username **Italy**

1. Matteo Salvini/ @matteosalvinimi
2. Luigi Di Maio/ @luigidimaio
3. Beppe Grillo/ @beppe\_grillo
4. Alessandro Di Battista/ @ale\_dibattista
5. Lega official/ @LegaSalvini
6. M5S /@Mov5Stelle

Following are the newspapers whose article were selected to use as data:

**Finland:**

1. Helsingin Sanomat (neutral)
2. Aamulehti (neutral)
3. Turun Sanomat (neutral)

**Italy:**

1. La Repubblica (social democracy)
2. Corriere della Sera (centrism)
3. Il Giornale (conservative liberalism)

**The Netherlands:**

1. De Volkskrant (progressive left)
2. De Telegraaf (populist right wing)
3. NRC Handelsblad (progressive liberal)

Table 5 below summarises the main information about the datasets, or corpora, of this study.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Legacy Media</b>	<b>Twitter</b>
<i>Finland</i>	28 851 (number of articles 58)	1 151 123
<i>Italy</i>	74 873 (number of articles 154)	318 550
<i>The Netherlands</i>	31 148 (number of articles 49)	40 333

*Table 5 Number of tokens (words) for each dataset*

It is important to note that even as the term “neutral” is being used in order to describe political affiliation – in this case with the Finnish newspapers – it is

to be made clear that absolute neutrality is not a reality when it comes to the political affiliation of media houses (Isotalus 2017; Aragrande 2018; Moffit 2018). However, the selected Finnish newspapers presented above do not officially show political colour and are the major newspapers of a country which has been ranked as the least unbiased and balanced in Europe in terms of news media, according to the latest study by the Reuters institute of Journalism (2021).

The time frame for observing both Twitter and the print media is the same: 1.- 31.5.2019. The newspaper articles included in the corpus from each country were identified and collected by using “populism”, “populists” and “populist policy” as search words (in each language). In Italy also the words “Matteo Salvini”, “Luigi Di Maio”, “M5S” and “Lega” were used. In the Netherlands: “Geert Wilders”, “Marjolein Faber” and “PVV” as for Finland: “Perussuomalaiset”, “Jussi Halla-aho”, “Teuvo Hakkarainen” and “Laura Huhtasaari”. Taken into consideration the time frame of the collected articles, those covering populism also covered the European elections of that month and year.

It is relevant to underline that in this research the data will not be analysed in terms of absolute (raw) frequencies. This is due to the fact that the datasets from each country do not have equal number of articles and tweets as can be noted. The unbalance of the country specific corpus is however unproblematic in terms of the analysis or this research itself, indeed, as the data will be analysed using normalized frequencies, a degree of comparability between the datasets and the ultimate results of this research is established (see Chapter 3.3.1).

These three countries have been chosen first and foremost because in each of these there has been a surge of political populist movements (Müller, 2016; Inglehart and Norris 2017, 23; Hameleers, Bos and de Vreese 2018; Mouffe 2018; Hatakka 2019; Mudde, 2019; Traverso 2019). In Finland we have seen the rise of the “perussuomalaiset” (Finns Party), in Italy the MS5 as well as the Lega and in the Netherlands the continuing rising presence and stabilization of the PVV (Dutch party for Freedom) (Mudde 2019).



According to the most recent study conducted by the Reuters Institute For the Study of Journalism (2021), Finnish news media was considered one of the most balanced and unbiased in the Europe. The overall trust in the media system and news was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with a trust rate of 65%. Italy positioned itself in 26<sup>th</sup> position with 40% and The Netherlands 4<sup>th</sup> with 59%. The media polarization in Italy is largely wider than in the Netherlands or Finland, but both in Italy and The Netherlands the print media shows a clear allegiance to certain policies or values (right wing- left wing/liberal-conservative). In terms of Twitter usage, this study showed that both in Finland and the Netherlands it was the 4<sup>th</sup> most used application for messaging whereas in Italy Twitter was the 6<sup>th</sup>.

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, Hallin and Mancini (2004) systematised differences between western media systems, identifying three different models and the data reported here include only two of these models: The Mediterranean or polarized pluralist model (Italy) and the North/Central Europe of Democratic corporatist model (Finland and The Netherlands). The rationale motivating this choice of excluding the North Atlantic or Liberal model is threefold: first, the USA and Canada are not European countries nor were they involved in the European union elections of 2019; second, in 2019 the United Kingdom was leaving the European union due to Brexit, thus setting their populist politicians' rhetoric apart from that of other member states'; and thirdly, the Republic of Ireland does and did not have a prominent populist party or relevant political actors identifying as such.

As the actual method and process of analysis will be elaborated further on in more detail (see Chapter 3.3), it is relevant in terms of the rationale behind the mixed methodology of this research to briefly consider an assumption concerning the mass media in today's globalized world (as has also been discussed in Chapter 2). Mass media, as a matter of fact, facilitate and practically enable the circulation of information across languages, cultures and countries, but it would be naïve to think that they do so following "fair-play" rules so to say (Aragrande 2018, 73), indeed mass media "can privilege specific information and they can also prohibit and hinder information from

being circulated” (Schäffner & Bassnett 2010, 8). This point is particularly relevant to this study as it caters a valid reason to go beyond the texts (the communication, discourse and rhetoric) and observe not only at what is in the dataset (corpora), but also at the context of the texts in it as well as it in addition gives a credible reason for using a mixed methodology.

The corpora that have been built by using the data described above follow Baker (M. Baker 1995, 1996) and McEnery et al.’s (McEnery et al., 2006) categorizations, and they can be defined as “specialized comparable corpora” in that they truly focus on a specific text genre (newspaper media and twitter tweets) in three different languages (Finnish, Italian and Dutch), embedded in three different socio-political contexts within the European Union in a short period of time. McEnery and Wilson (2011) claim that corpus-driven and corpus-based approaches do in no way exclude each other out, but instead are complementary (see also McEnery et al., 2006), which is why this research starts from a simple wordlist from a concordance like AntConc and further elaborates on collocates and concordance analysis (see Chapters 3.2.3., 3.2.4., 3.2.5.).

For the purposes of understanding this data in linguistic terms, I am fluent both in Finnish and Dutch and in addition I am competent in reading and comprehending written and spoken Italian.

### *3.2.1. The WhiKnow-project - Whirl Of Knowledge: Cultural Populism and Polarization in Europe*

WhiKnow’s trans-generational and interdisciplinary team studies polarisation in contemporary societies, identifying a ‘whirl of knowledge’ that intertwines media, politics and science. The project engages in theoretical and comparative empirical work, combining big data with qualitative and experimental research and media ethnography. WhiKnow explores how social media hypes brokers or meaning-makers and how these produce identifications, affects and emotions in polarisation. Politicians promote polarized forms of knowledge, scientists take part in talk shows and journalists step in as politicians. A neutrally intended scientific tweet can end up in a

completely different constellation – trolled and contributing to political antagonism.

It appears that the affective spin of the ‘Whirl of Knowledge’ is fuelled by blending and intertwining knowledge, ‘cultural populism’, and polarizing knowledge that generates new forms of subjectivity. Affect, belief, and intimacy moulds together media, politics and science, and previously distinct modes of knowledge in social media may lose their status as democracy’s control mechanisms as societies polarize. The scholars in the WhiKnow-project study how societies change through relation and transmission of knowledge. The polarised societies in East Central Europe which are studied are relevant for the future of Europe: Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Czech Republic. The project partners engage in other polarised/ing societies: Belgium, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the UK.

The research questions by the WhiKknow project prompt our multi-level analysis:

1. What topics polarize and cluster and by whom? WhiKnow first generates big data on social media to find out what polarises, where and how in spring 2019 (EP elections, Brexit).
2. How do media users and producers relate to knowledge, and how do people emotionally respond to and relate to knowledge? How emotions work in polarized contexts through the big data but also through ethnographic research, to investigate how sharing polarized knowledge takes place on the micro level. This is followed by experimental analysis of polarized knowledge evokes emotions.
3. How does polarizing or softening knowledge generate new subjectivities? Theorizing the intertwined media, politics and academia, and the role of emotions, humour, populism, transnationalism, and anti-intellectualism we investigate multi-level knowledge production. (WhiKnow project, 2021).

### 3.2.2. *Discourse Analysis*

Discourse analysis (DA) is an extremely interdisciplinary field of studies that employs a wide variety of resources and methods, and as such, it brings together very different disciplines from a range of academic fields (Aragrande 2018, 60). If one would ask the question “What is Discourse Analysis?”, the

*Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (Schiffrin et al. 2001, 1) would offer the following reply:

Discourse analysis is a rapidly growing and evolving field. Current research in this field now flows from numerous academic disciplines that are very different from one another. Included, of course, are the disciplines in which models for understanding, and, methods for analyzing, discourse first developed, such as linguistics, anthropology, and philosophy. But also included are disciplines that have applied – and thus often extended – such models and methods to problems within their own academic domains, such as communication, cognitive psychology, social psychology, and artificial intelligence.

As such an all-embracing field, DA offers researchers a wide range of flexibility and freedom in analysing the discourses they are interested in, as they are able to avail themselves of the tools that they deem appropriate and fit to the task. It is clear though that the sort of analysis which is ultimately carried out in any field – political sciences through the lens of political communication in this particular case – mainly depends on the definition of *discourse* that the researcher has in mind.

In line with the pluviosity of contributions to DA as a field of study, the actual definition of *discourse* is varied and largely influenced by the academic background and upbringing of the researcher themselves (Aragrande 2018, 60-61). Thus, it is important to note that for this very reason P. Baker (2006, 3) describes discourse as being a “problematic term as it is used in social and linguistic research in a number of interrelated yet different ways”.

For the purposes of this research, I will simply approach discourse following Foucault who defined it as “practices that systematically form the object of which they speak” (Foucault 1972, 49), by simultaneously being aware that various other and perfectly acceptable and academically valid definitions of discourse do exist. Before taking a closer look into DA, itself it is still relevant to point out that language of course does play a key role in the construction of discourse – and in relevance to this particular research to communication – as P. Baker points out:

One way that discourses are constructed is via language. Language (both as an abstract system: phonetics, grammar, lexicon etc. and as a context-based system of communication) is not the same as discourse, but we can carry out analysis of language in texts in order to uncover traces of discourses. (P. Baker 2006, 5)

An important basic premise of DA is that the use of language is not only a linguistic but also a social activity. With each expression, the language user does not only describe things but also does something else: acts in a certain role, negotiates about something, makes decisions, belongs a community. Thus, in the framework of discourse analysis, language is seen not only as a linguistic but also as a social system, and thus by studying the use of language, information can be obtained not only about language but also about society and culture and in the case of this research: politics and populism within it (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, 13–14). The functions of language use are not necessarily intentional or conscious, but the user of the language can enable various situations even unconsciously (Jokinen et al. 1993, 42–43).

Discourse analysis is based on a functional conception of language, which means that language is seen as an instrument of interaction and a social phenomenon (Luke 2000, 135). From the point of view of functional language perception, linguistic meanings are situation-specific and arise in the current context of a particular situation where language is being used (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, 13–14; Luukka 2000, 138).

The view of the two-way relationship between language and context is also essential behind DA: on the one hand, the surrounding world, i.e. context, influences our use of language, on the other hand, the use of language builds the surrounding world (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, 17). Such a view of the construction of the world around us is called “constructiveness of language”. The language user builds or constructs the objects s/he is talking about. At the same time, when describing anything or any phenomenon, the language user loads latent assumptions into the object about what is “normal” or what is considered “normal” (Jokinen et al. 1993, 18–19).

In DA, the key concept is of course discourse. However, this concept can mean different things: in a broader sense discourses are different situations of

language use while in a more specific and essential sense for this research, discourses are socially accepted ways of using language in relation to a phenomenon (Gee 2015, 34). Such language use patterns are relatively well-established and internally consistent (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, 50).

Discourses, i.e. different ways of using language, represent and conceptualize world phenomena in different ways. This means that different discourses may have different relationships with each other: for example, they may compete with each other, or some may be more present than others (Fairclough 2003, 124). Some discourses may take on such a shared and self-evident status that they become “truths” and weigh other discourses to the margins. An example of this is a situation in which a discourse emphasizing the purity of national culture would gain dominance and stifle a discourse that fosters the cohesion of peoples (Jokinen et al. 1993, 29).

Of course, discourses also change over time: different discourses become hegemonic and move into the marginal at different times (P. Baker 2006, 14). A frequently used example of this is how, in previous centuries, homosexuality was perceived and accepted as a disease, while today the discourse has evolved further to recognize that homosexuality is one of the many accepted sexual orientations. These shifts happen because of language users, indeed language users construct discourses in social practices and at the same time discourses construct social reality (Jokinen et al. 1993, 26–27). This notion of discourses reflects the idea put forward by Pietikäinen and Mäntynen (2009, 17) about the relationship between language use and context.

Context as a concept is essential in DA and it is a broad one: it refers to all the factors that influence the formation of meaning and enable and limit its use and interpretation (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009, 30). Indeed, as linguistic meanings are situational, the language used in the analysis must be examined at a specific time and place and the interpretation must be related to it (Jokinen et al. 1993, 29–30; Luukka 2000, 144). Thus, the meaning of any word, expression or discourse is not permanent but dynamic and context-dependent (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, 28).

The smallest level of context is the *context of situation*. Situational context refers to an immediate social situation of which language use is a part. Social and linguistic activities (what can be done, what kind of agency takes place, how language works) and the roles of actors (whether they are asked, discussed, challenged, etc.) are essential in each communicative situation (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, 31–33).

The next level of context is *discursive practices*, which refer to the ways in which discourse activities are generated over a long period of time by the cultural environment, how they shape linguistic activity, help identify and interpret it, and relate to broad cultural practices. Discursive practices are – so to speak – between situational language use and a broad sociocultural conception of context. Finally, the broadest context is the *socio-cultural context*, which refers to a broad social, cultural and societal environment (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, 35-36).

One area of research in DA is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which has been used relatively often in Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (see sub-chapter 3.2.7). In CDA, the analysis of the processes of producing the text and meanings of discourse research is combined with the analysis of the sociocultural dimension of the language use and situation and the social production of power. In the field of critical discourse research, the “traditional” discourse research which has been presented in this chapter, has been criticized for its limited interest in explaining phenomena, the construction of discourse practices, and their social consequences (Fairclough 1995, 23–24). In this research, the examination and explanation of cultural and social phenomena presented above is in part present, for newspapers undeniably use power to describe things and phenomena. On the other hand, I do not see such clear features of the exercise of power in my research topic that it would be justified to conduct actual critical discourse research.

### 3.2.3. *Corpus Linguistics*

In the field of Corpus Linguistics, extensive textual material is studied, i.e. corpora, representing real language use. Various computer programs are used in corpus research to analyse textual data. In the case of this research MAXQDA alongside a simpler concordance (AntConc) will be used (see Chapter 3.3). Corpus Linguistics offers many advantages over manual language research in terms of sampling and reliability: computers are certainly better in storing large amount of data than the human brain and when it comes to counting, they are undeniably superior. Indeed, way humans read texts is linear and time-expensive, while computers can identify, analyse and “read” in a vertical manner complex patterns of language use without human-like interpretive errors or biases during the study (Biber et al. 1998, 4; see also Zappavigna 2012; Partington 2004; Mikhailov and Cooper 2016).

Corpus Linguistics is a powerful methodology that can be used to study a wide range of phenomena, and roughly corpus research can be divided into the study of linguistic phenomena and the study of different types of text. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, as politics is often referred to as communication – without the other there is no other (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999, 250) – it is safe to state that language plays a key role in political communication studies. Therefore, it is unsurprising to find topical research within the context of politics and populism which has been conducted using Corpus Linguistics such as Aragrande and De Lazzari (2021) where narratives of expat political engagement in a corpus of Italian media outlets were studied as well as Aragrande and Nardone (2017) were the scholars interpreted web-based populism in Italy founding their corpus based analysis of selected keywords in populist leader Beppe Grillo’s blog, not to mentions Breeze’s (2020) work on Exploring populist styles of political discourse in Twitter and Kranert’s (2020) overview on discursive approaches to populism across disciplines just to mention a few.

The study of linguistic phenomena may focus on the connection of certain words or structures to other words or certain grammatical structures. Another possibility is to study the occurrence of words or structures in certain registers, dialects, or specific time periods. The study of different types of text, on the



other hand can look at the co-occurrence of either individual linguistic phenomena or linguistic phenomena in specific registers, dialects, or historical periods (Biber et al. 1998, 5–6; see also: Zappavigna 2012; Partington 2004; Mikhailov and Cooper 2016; Aragrande 2020; Aragrande and De Lazzari 2021).

Corpus Linguistics is based on quantitative frequencies, as the study often focuses on the frequencies of linguistic phenomena as has been presented above. Focus is often given to how many times certain words occur, how many words co-occur with them, and how common collocations are (Biber et al. 1998, 8). However, as the research process progresses, the quantitative research approach often moves in a more qualitative direction, as quantitative results and formulas must always be interpreted contextually (P. Baker and McEnery 2015, 2). In addition to reporting quantitative findings, the task of Corpus Linguistic research is to consider the significance of findings for language use patterns and their learning (Biber et al. 1998, 5).

Thanks to computer-based analysis, corpus data can be very large, up to several billions of words. Today's large corpora have changed scholars' perceptions of language conventions: according to the often cited quote from Sinclair (1991, 100), “the language looks rather different when you look at a lot of it at once”. Too small a corpus can affect results, for example by giving too much weight to individual occurrences (Biber et al. 1998, 249). Admittedly, depending on the method, smaller corpora may well be sufficient for analysis; for example – when utilizing discourse research – using smaller corpora is an advantageous possibility (Baker 2006, 26), as Aragrande (2020, 80) “small corpora can bring valuable insights” especially when used in small case studies that focus on very specific genres.

The computer programs used in corpus research are, in their simplest outlook, the so-called concordancers, software that allow to visualize text vertically in concordance lines according to a keyword in context view. A concordance is a list of words or phrases together with immediate contexts in which they occur (Mikhailov and Cooper 2016, 48). Concordancers are used to

search the corpus for search words or structures, i.e. *nodes* (Jantunen 2004, 15); after the search, the concordance program displays the concordance, i.e. a list of all the nodes in the corpus and a certain amount of text surrounding each node. The concordance view is also called the KWIC (key word in context) view (P. Baker 2006, 71.)

When conducting corpus analysis, the text corpus itself is the first-order data. Because the large masses of text are too large for human processing, concordancers and similar text-analysis software are utilized to access large quantities of text simultaneously and make complex calculation over such texts. Concordances are second-order data, and since it would be very difficult for the human eye to process and sort correctly and unbiasedly hundreds of concordance, those pieces of software step in to sort and classify various representations of concordances by statistical method to get for example collocates, which as represent third-order data (Stubbs 2001, 66–67).

#### *3.2.4. Phraseology*

As described above, Corpus Linguistics represents a powerful tool for this research, a tool that is backed up by engaging with the methodological framework of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies with concepts in the field of phraseology. Phraseology examines the more frequent occurrence of a grammatical form or word with a linguistic structure (Gries 2008, 6). Phraseology combines corpus linguistics with the use of corpus programs to analyse textual material (Granger and Meunier 2008, XIX).

#### *3.2.5. Collocation*

Collocation refers to the co-occurrence of words with certain other words more often than would be expected, and collocations are such co-occurring words (Jantunen 2004, 15–16; P. Baker and McEnery 2005, 2; Partington 1998, 15). The concept of collocation was introduced in 1957 by J. R. Firth, who described the phenomenon with the phrase “you shall know a word by the company it keeps” (Firth 1957, 11).

The basic assumption of collocation is to get the meaning of words on a syntagmatic level (Firth 1957, 196); the meaning depends on the kind of words with which the word co-occurs. Collocations might be used for various purposes. In many cases, they give a broader picture of word usage than a simple word frequency count or a concordance. They tell about the meaning of the word, about the idioms and set phrases it is used in, in a few words they give us a profile of that word. In contrastive and comparative studies, charting collocational patterns might also help account for the differences between languages or language varieties (Mikhailov and Cooper 2016, 56-57).

The language user learns to identify whether the use of some expressions together (i.e., collocation) is typical or atypical (Partington 1998, 17). Leech (1974, 17) writes about the collocative meaning of words, which consists of the associations that a word gets according to the meaning of the words that tend to occur in its vicinity. Partington (1998, 16) calls this phenomenon presented by Leech the psychological or associative meaning of collocation, whereas Hoey calls this “lexical priming” (Hoey, 2003). When speakers are exposed to language, they learn to anticipate which words often occur in close proximity to each other (Firth 1957, 195). The psychological aspect and associations of collocation are related according to Stubbs (1996, 195): when collocates are used repeatedly and automatically in media texts and elsewhere, for example, they affect how these things and phenomena are thought about. This is particularly important considering this research which among many other things studies how populism as a concept is being portrayed and redistributed in legacy and digital media within the hybrid media system.

Collocation is determined by three factors: frequency, statistical significance and extent (Jantunen 2004, 15–16). Repeatability means that the words must appear together enough to be considered as collocates. Many authors who have studied collocation refer to this recurring occurrence of collocations, such as Firth (1957, 194), which uses the term “habitual collocation,” and Partington (1998, 16), which uses the term “patterns of collocation” (collocation formulas). Sometimes the concept of collocate is also used to study words that rarely occur together (Jantunen 2004, 16), indeed,

collocates with low frequency of co-occurrence should not be regarded as weak collocates but they might point at interesting and novel patterns in the language use.

Statistical significance means that the aim is to find words that occur together so often that it is not a coincidence. Thus, the study of collocates does not necessarily focus only on absolute or relative frequencies (how often collocates occur in the text), although the mere presence of a frequency may be thought to suggest the significance of a collocate (Jantunen 2004, 17). However, absolute and relative frequencies can distort the association of a collocate with a node, as more common words can occur as collocates by chance alone (Biber et al. 1998, 265). There are various statistical tests to prove statistical significance, such as the MI (Mutual Information) and T-tests (Biber 1998, 265–268). The MI test measures how strong the connection between two words is (Feng 2020); in practice, the test compares the probability of words occurring together with their probability of occurring separately (Biber et al. 1998, 265–268). The T-test, in turn, measures the degree to which it can be said that words are related to each other (Feng 2020), in practice comparing the perceived occurrence of words to their presumed occurrence.

Dimension (Jantunen 2004, 18), on the other hand, refers to four things :

1. The number of words in a collocation relationship
2. The distance between the node and the collocates
3. The grammatical relationship between the node and the collocates
4. The symmetry of the field of view

The first consideration is whether only co-occurrences of two words or also multi-word combinations are counted as collocations. The distance between the node and the collocate is related to how far from the node the collocate can be. Different researchers (Stubbs 1995, 32–33; Sinclair 1991, 170) have used different observation intervals and there is no absolute consensus among researchers on the most appropriate observation interval. Examples of widely used review intervals are 2: 2, 3: 3, and 4: 4 (i.e., two

words from the left side of the node and two words from the right side of the node, etc.) and of course, the choice of the review interval naturally affects the research results (Jantunen 2004, 19).

From the point of view of grammar and the grammatical relationship between words, it must be decided whether the syntactic structures in which the lexemes are used must be taken into account when considering collocations, and whether crossings of sentence or sentence boundaries should be taken into account (i.e. the collocate may be in a different sentence than the node) (Jantunen 2004, 20). Finally, it should be decided whether the field of view is symmetrical (e.g., 3:3) or whether more words should be considered from either side of the node (Jantunen 2004, 21).

### *3.2.6. Discourse prosody*

Discourse prosody refers to the occurrence of words in their typical sentence contexts and thus also in discursive contexts (Jantunen 2018, 29). With the help of the discourse prosody, language users express their attitudes towards the topic under discussion, i.e. the word under study. They tell something for the reason of the language user and thus can reveal discourses (Stubbs 2001, 65). Discourse processes are related to the “task” of the expression used, which is a function of the expression. Without a discourse prosody (i.e., a semantic prosody), the period formed by words has only an empty meaning without its concrete meaning in language use (Sinclair 2004, 34).

Compared to collocation or even concordances at times, when looking at discourse prosody, broader excerpts of textual material are examined. Indeed, the text window may not be wide enough to reflect the attitude expressed by the author. Moreover, it may be impossible to establish the attitude they exhibit without being familiar with the broader context, with collocations alone or even concordances (Stubbs 2001, 106; Jantunen 2004, 26).

Depending on the researcher, other terms may be used instead of discourse prosody. An almost similar term often used is *semantic prosody* used by Sinclair (2004), which emphasizes the contextual nature of words and the fact that the meaning of a word consists of a larger whole than the word (Jantunen 2018, 29). The term discourse prosody, on the other hand, focuses on the relationship between the author and the reader and the emergence of discourse cohesion (Stubbs 2001, 66), and is thus more useful in corpus-assisted discourse research.

Different scholars have used the concept of discourse prosody (and semantic prosody) in different ways. In his research, Partington (2014) has combined discourse prosody with a bipolar positive meaning-negative meaning division coming up with the term *evaluative prosody*, describing it both as a process and as an item. For the purposes of this study, I will employ the term discourse prosody by meaning both the process, i.e. words combining to express tones, meaning and attitudes that is not visible at the single word or sentence level, and the item, i.e. the stretch of text under consideration.

### 3.2.7. *Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)*

Corpus-Assisted Discourse research combines two theoretical and methodological perspectives: Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics. Until the beginning of the 21st century, Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics were seldom combined. There were many reasons: corpora consisted only of fragments of texts, there were no large corpora of spoken language for discourse researchers in spoken language, and researchers felt that corpus materials “stripped” the text of the context needed for discourse research (Partington 2004, 9-10).

Methods in corpus research and phraseology can be good tools for searching, identifying, and analysing discourses as a common connection between two words (e.g. collocations) in natural language use may be a hint of hegemonic discourses (P. Baker 2006, 13). Essentially, CADS seek to find and

describe non-obvious meanings in texts. Such meanings are the embodiment of discourses which cannot be revealed by numbers alone. Indeed, quantitative analysis (using simple as well as complex statistics for extracting frequencies, collocates or keywords) and qualitative analysis (close reading of concordance lines) combined can reveal processes that form non-obvious productions of meanings, i.e. discourses (Partington et al. 2013, 11).

Fairclough (2003) writes that the ability of the media to exercise power is based on systematic ways of using media language. A single news article has a relatively insignificant effect, but repeated ways of dealing with cause-and-effect relationships, agency, and readers' positioning are effective ways of reproducing and modifying social reality. This is why, according to Fairclough, CADS is a good way of catching up with the means of constructing social reality, as it is the systematic ways of using language that can be explored by employing corpora and Corpus Linguistics.

In fact, the data in this research is partly a selected collection (see Chapter 3.2) of newspaper articles, as Fairclough suggests. However, it should be pointed out that even repeated patterns in language might fail in making a discourse influential or dominant; a single speech by the head of state can have a far greater impact than hundreds of texts written by "ordinary people". In addition, what is left unwritten may be more important than the broader approach to the matter (P. Baker 2006, 19). This is to say, that corpora are useful in detecting such repetitions and cumulative effects of discourse (P. Baker, 2006) but they also have shortcomings that a discourse analytical approach can make up for.

Corpora can be used to search for discourses in different ways and at different levels. At its simplest, the corpus can help find examples of a phenomenon that the researcher did not notice before. With more complex investigations, a corpus can reveal patterns of language use that have not even come to be thought of. Between these two extremes, the corpus can confirm, overturn, or check the intuition of the researcher (Partington 2003, 12).

The differences between corpus research and discourse research have been listed by Leech (2000, 678–679) who highlights, for example, the differences

between the data, the collector of the data and the availability to the public, and the qualitative and quantitative research approach. The unifying factors, on the other hand, are, for example, the analysis of repetitive and regular structures and patterns of language use, as well as data representing actual language use. Ready-made or self-assembled corpora can be used as material in corpus-assisted discourse research too and they can be explored through different methods, for example word lists, concordances and keywords (Jantunen 2018, 26). According to Lehto's (2018, 84) outline, Corpus Linguistic and discourse research methods complement each other: observations about the corpus help to find discourses, and discursive information can provide tips for looking for certain things in the corpus.

### *3.3. Method and process of analysis*

In order to achieve the objective of this research (Chapter 3.1), I conduct a content analysis using mixed methods deriving both from DA (Discourse Analysis) and Corpus Linguistics (CL), based on the gathered data from Twitter and selected newspapers from Finland, Italy and The Netherlands in the context of the European Parliament election of 2019. The focus point of my research in both the Legacy Media as well as Twitter (as the Digital Media) will be populism in the mentioned context of the European Parliament elections of 2019.

The analysis will be conducted using two software: a concordancer for corpus analysis (AntConc by Anthony) and MAXQDA. AntConc is “a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis” (Anthony, 2022), it is a very simple tool that allows basic concordance, collocation, wordlist and keyword analyses. MAXQDA is designed for qualitative and mixed methods research, it is a world leading software package, and, at present, it is the only leading QDA (advanced data analysis) software that offers identical features both for Mac and Windows users. The software program MAXDictio of MAXQDA offers 3 types of analysis tools:



1. Analysis of word frequencies and word combinations.
2. Analysis of Keyword in Context (KWIC).
3. Dictionary based analysis (quantitative content analysis).

As can be noted, based on the theoretical approaches presented the analysis tools (1-3) and AntConc are complementary: concordance, collocation, discourse prosody/ semantic prosody.

### 3.3.1. Research question 1

For research question 1 that investigates the representation of populism and populist actors on legacy media vs. the representation of populism and populist actors on digital, the first stage is to analyse the legacy media data by inputting it in the MAXQDA MAXDictio software. With MAXDictio, the KWIC (Keyword in context)-tool will be utilized in order to search the corpus for *nodes*, certain search words or structures (Jantunen 2004, 15). In this first stage of the analysis the *node* searched for with the MAXQDA concordance program will be the word *populism*.

This part of the analysis will be conducted with a country-by-country approach: first the Finnish legacy media + the digital media data will be analysed following the Italian one and lastly the data gathered from The Netherlands.

In all parts of the analysis in all the languages used (Finnish, Italian and Dutch), the lemma *populism* is considered in all of its forms: *populismi*, *populistit*, *populismo*, *populisti*, *populisme*, *populisten* = Populism, populists ecc. In the analysis of word frequencies, functions words such as prepositions ecc. are excluded from the search in order to obtain a functioning lemmatized list.

After this search, the concordance program MAXQDA displays the concordance, i.e. a list of all the nodes in the corpus and a certain amount of

text surrounding each node. As has been established: the concordance view is also called the KWIC (Key word in context) view (P. Baker 2006, 71).

Due to the fact that the large quantities of texts are too large for human processing, the concordance program – in this case AntConc – creates a corpus of text in the search for the node concordance. Thus, moving on from the concordance or KWIC-view, I will be able to take a closer look at the context in which those words appear and then move on to collocation analysis thanks to AntConc collocation feature. In this case, when I have acquired the *nodes* (*populism*) from the data I will take a greater look at the co-occurrence of words with certain other words. The theoretical concept of collocation refers to the co-occurrence of words with particular other words more often than would be expected (Jantunen 2004, 15–16; Baker and McEnery 2005, 2; Partington 1998, 15).

In the process of studying the collocates, I take into account statistical significance and I regard to it as the validation that the words found co-occurring are not coincidental. In fewer words, this means that the study of collocates does not only put focus on the absolute or relative frequencies (how often collocates occur or no not occur in the text), although the mere presence of a frequency may be thought to suggest the significance of a collocate (Jantunen 2004, 17.)

However, as has been established: the absolute and relative frequencies can distort the association of a collocate with a node, as it is possible that more common words can occur as collocates by mere chance alone (Biber et al. 1998, 265). This is why collocates alongside close reading of concordance lines will be employed in this research and, once again, data will not be analysed in terms of absolute (raw) frequencies as has been explained above. Indeed, the datasets from each country do not have equal number of articles and tweets, but by using normalised frequencies results can be comparable in an unbiased way: this guarantees a degree of comparability between the datasets and the ultimate results of this research.

After the collocation analysis, I will move on to discourse prosody (see Chapter 3.2.6). The discourse prosody refers to the occurrence of words in

their typical sentence contexts and thus also in discursive contexts (Jantunen 2018, 29). Compared to collocation, when looking at the discourse method, broader excerpts from the material are examined. First, the amount of data may not be wide enough to reflect the attitude expressed by the author. Second, it may be impossible to say of the collocates with some of the nodes what kind of attitude they exhibit without being familiar with the broader context, the concordance (Stubbs 2001, 106; Jantunen 2004, 26).

The process of analysis can be summarised as follows:

Concordance - Node (e.g. *populism*) KWIC-view → Collocation → Discourse prosody

In terms of the analysis, concordances and collocations are valuable with respect to research question 1 as they will provide quantitative results in order to numerically observe findings such as how many times certain words have appeared with the *node* populism. However, it will be the ultimate stage of analysing and studying the results of discourse prosody which will illuminate the concept of populism both in terms of simple representation both in legacy and digital media, but also in terms of the attitudes that are behind these representations. In other words: it will not be only relevant to observe by so called topic modelling, whether the most frequent words used with populism are the keyword ones that derive from academic literature such as: *the people, the real people, the nation, the elites, immigration, economics, us, the media, democracy, the EU, enemies of the state*, ecc. But what are the values and attitudes behind them within a broader context.

After the data of the legacy media of each country's dataset has been analyzed, the research will move on to stage two in terms of the data gathered from Twitter. The process of analysis will be the same one as presented above. The dataset consisting of tweets is larger by each country in comparison to the legacy media one, but with regard to the analyzing tools of the MAXQDA-software which are able to utilize the analyzing process presented earlier, also specifically on data collected from Twitter, the process will be similar in practical computer software terms. Of course it is important to note that in regard of the Twitter data, emphasis is not given only to the word populism but also on the specific hashtags as has been elaborated in Chapter 3.2. The

comparative angle of each country will come to light after all the data has been analyzed one country at time.

In topic modeling as it relates to text documents, the goal is to infer the words related to a given topic and the topics being discussed in a given document, based on analysis of a set of documents one has already observed (Zappavigna 2012), (Partington 2014), Aragrande (2018). This set of documents as has been established is called a “corpus”. By this topic modelling this will not only visualize the most used combinations that are related to the word *populism*, but further illuminate in what context the legacy media and digital media are representing populism and policy issues related to it. It will also bring to light the differences between the three selected countries: Finland, Italy and the Netherlands.

### 3.3.2. Research question 2

For research question 2. Where I investigate the relation between populist actors (politicians) on Twitter in relation to populism as a concept itself the method of analysis will be the same in terms of the usage of the concordance program MAXQDA-software:

Concordance- Node (*populism*) KWIC-view -> Collocation -> Discourse prosody

The major difference to research question 1 will be the initial concordance search for *nodes*. This means that for analyzing research question 2, emphasis will not be put alone to the actual word *populism* as populist actors do not tend to use the word itself nor do they likely to identify with it. It is relevant to note however that this does not mean that when investigating the online rhetoric and discourse of populist actors the word *populism* will not appear as a node, it only means that it is not the ultimate keyword which the research will be based upon.

The issues that the populist actors tweet about and the way that they have conducted their discourse and rhetoric on Twitter will ultimately reveal how the literature on populism and populist communication is mirrored on the actual online behavior of populists in the hybrid media system. Thus, the same

keywords that are given emphasis to also in the analysis of research question 1: *the people, the real people, the nation, the elites, immigration, economics, us, the media, democracy, the EU, enemies of the state*, will be searched for. However, this analysis conducted, will be more *corpus driven* than *corpus based*, which in practical terms means that the data (the discourse of the populist actors in the tweets) will reveal itself in terms of what is numerically a topic most frequently discussed. As has been established before, for example McEnery and Wilson (2011) claim that corpus-driven and corpus-based approaches do in no way exclude each other out, but instead are complementary (see also McEnery et al., 2006).

Additionally as is the case with research question 1, the methods of concordance and collocation will be valuable in a broader point of view in providing quantitative results in order to numerically observe findings such as how many times certain other words have appeared with the *nodes*, that derive from the populist online discourse - it will be the final phase of analyzing and studying the results of discourse prosody which will share light to the relationship between populist actors online and the concept of populism itself. Through the results of research question 2 this research will be able to further elaborate and present discursive communicational patterns which make the “populist frame” on an international level.

### 3.3.3. Research question 3

Research question 3 is based on the results that derived from the analysis made for research questions 1 and 2. Research question 3 will be answered by observing the results of research questions 1 and 2 and additionally mirrored against the contextual elements which derive from the research literature, see Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and Chapter 3.1 Discourse analysis, the latter emphasizing among many other things the context of each particular situation. Indeed as has been discussed; the smallest level of the context is the *context of the situation* which refers to an immediate social situation of which language use is a part. Social and linguistic activities (what can be done, what kind of

agency takes place, how language works) and the roles of actors (whether they are asked, discussed, challenged, etc.) are essential. (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 31–33.)

With the three research questions presented above and the methodology and process of analysis explained, the objective of this research which is to: describe and explain populist actors and populism as a concept and their representation on social and legacy media during the European parliament elections 2019 in Finland, Italy and The Netherlands, will be met.

### 3.4. Hypotheses

It is to expected when observing the two media spheres: legacy media and digital media, that a clash between the representation of populism by the media itself (legacy media) and by other actors in digital media and populist actors themselves will emerge (Krämer 2018; Atton 2006). The media itself as a concept can be expected to be an actively participating actor within the frameworks of *media populism* (see Chapter 2). This can possibly manifest itself in the way that the media as an actor might declare to be the champion of truth for the “normal people” and the citizens (Plasser and Ulram 2003). Paradoxically this claim of “representing the people” is famously stated by the populist actors themselves to justify their policies and other actions.

The valuable comparative angle will come into part when studying the eventual results as the data consist of three different European countries and to further explore whether any obvious discrepancies between these countries do emerge. Taking into consideration the political culture and the polarization of the media of the selected countries, it is to be expected that stronger cleavages between the image and support for populism do emerge.

As populists are known to portray the legacy media as an opposing political actor (Jacobs and Spierings 2019) – part of the elite, the establishment and the problems of society – it is most probable that this will also rise from my data as a result. What will be essential in the analysis is to see whether the argumentation of the populist actors follows different patterns on different

issues such as economics or immigration and opposition to the European union.

As immigration is a well-established policy issue that is being trumped by populist actors (Mudde 2019), especially in the framework of the research data – The 2019 EU elections – it will be valuable to observe how the populists and the legacy media portray this issue in all selected countries and what are the key arguments that surface.

Furthermore, it will be important to see how the dominant role of the digital media in the distribution of information and the communicative interactions between different actors affect how populist ideas and points of identification are created, spread and responded to. Also what does the hybrid media system actually mean from the point of view of spreading populist policies and how do other actors in the digital media react?

In addition, as the ongoing discussion whether populism is a threat to democracy more than a corrective phenomenon (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Laclau 2005; Stavrakakis 2018) is still yet to be answered, it will be most intriguing to investigate what the role of the hybrid media system within the frameworks of this study is. Finally, the results will certainly bring new insight to the question on how one should take the hybridity of media systems into consideration when researching populism and its relationship with media (Hatakka 2019).

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the analysis are presented. Some of the findings deriving from the analysis such as tables and word frequencies in them are briefly commented on, but the actual discussion of the results presented in this chapter will be looked into further in Chapter 5.

#### *4.1. Legacy Media: Finland*

As has been explained in the previous chapter (3.3. Method and process of analysis), the process of analysis in this research is the following:

Concordance- Node (*populism*) KWIC-view → Collocation → Discourse prosody

As the chosen data from the Finnish legacy media consists of newspaper articles from neutral media houses, the KWIC part of the analysis was executed with all the Finnish legacy media data as one dataset due to the fact that each chosen media house is neutral when it comes to political affiliation as has been explained in the previous Chapter 3.2. The data and methodology. However, it is essential to note that even as the term “neutral” is being used in order to describe political affiliation – in this case with the Finnish newspapers – it is to be made clear that absolute neutrality is never a reality when it comes to the political affiliation of media houses (Isotalus 2017; Aragrande 2018; Moffit 2018). Yet the selected Finnish newspapers presented above do not officially show political colour and are the major newspapers of a European country which has been ranked as the least unbiased and balanced on the continent in terms of news media, according to the latest study by the Reuters institute of Journalism (2021).



As has been explained in Chapter 3.3.1., in all stages of the analysis in all the languages used (Finnish, Italian and Dutch), the lemma *populism* is considered in all of its forms: *populismi*, *populistit*, *populismo*, *populisti*, *populisme*, *populisten* = Populism, populists etc.

It is important to note that in all the frequency lists presented in this chapter of results: the cut-off point was at least 10 occurrences for each item (no matter what the frequency is). In the analysis of word frequencies the function words such as prepositions etc. were excluded from the search in order to obtain a functioning lemmatized list. In this part of the analysis, a simple word frequency list was extracted - excluding function words - and it was capped to the first 50 most frequent words in the corpus. The table below (Table 6), gathers the most significant items divided by functional categories drawn from the data itself, each item is presented alongside its normalized frequency per 1000 words. Frequency per 1000 words given the size of the corpus (28 851) this will make the lexical items more comparable. The choice of the lexical items is based on its relevance to the purposes of this research and their frequency of occurrence throughout the dataset. Under the category of institutions are included those tools enabling political participation that are above political affiliation.

Countries/Regions		People		Institutions		Politics	
items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w
Eurooppa ( <i>Europe</i> )	7.1	Salvini	3.8	Puolue ( <i>Party</i> )	5.9	Populismi ( <i>Populism</i> )	2.3
Itävalta ( <i>Austria</i> )	2.9	Le Pen	2.1	Parlamentti ( <i>Parliament</i> )	2.1	Perussuomalaiset ( <i>The Finns party</i> )	2.8
Suomi ( <i>Finland</i> )	4.4	Strache	1.6	Vaalit ( <i>Elections</i> )	5.3	Vihreät ( <i>The Green party</i> )	1.2
Ranska ( <i>France</i> )	1.5	Huhtasaari	1.3	Ääni ( <i>Votes</i> )	1.0	Lega ( <i>The Lega-party</i> )	1.1
Italia ( <i>Italy</i> )	1.4			Puheenjohtaja/Johtaja ( <i>Leader</i> )	2.4	SDP/sosiaalidemokraatit ( <i>Social democrats</i> )	1.0
Venäjä ( <i>Russia</i> )	2.2			Politiikka ( <i>Politics</i> )	1.0		
				Tulos ( <i>Result</i> )	1.0		

Table 6. Finnish Legacy media: items divided by functional categories

Observing the frequency list, it can be noted that Salvini frequently gets mentioned by his family name. However, there are occurrences in the Finnish dataset of legacy media of him being addressed with both name and family name (34%). Similarly, Le Pen is usually addressed by family name although there is a degree of overlapping between name and family name occurring together (50%). Comparatively, she is mentioned more with both names, and he is referred to mostly by his family name, this could be an indication towards gender issues within the context of populist radical right movements as Mudde (2019, 147) has importantly noted. It is also plausible to suggest that Salvini is seen as a more popular/influential European populist actor in the Finnish context. Both these findings shall be discussed further in Chapter 5.

In terms of other populist leaders or parties, the analysis showed that the following populist actors appeared in the word frequency list (see Table 7 below), but their frequency number was significantly lower than the once presented in Table 1, hence they were not in the top 50. It is noteworthy to mention that the leader of the Finnish populist party, Jussi Halla-aho did not score nowhere as high as Laura Huhtasaari and that the Italian MS5-party and its prominent figures Di Maio and Grillo also scored lower than Lega or Salvini for example (both of the latter in the top 50). Also this shall be discussed further in Chapter 5 (Discussion of the results).

<b>Item</b>	<b>fp1000w</b>
Halla-aho	0.6
<i>MS5 (The five star movement)</i>	0.5
Di Maio	0.5
Grillo	0.2
Wilders	0.08

*Table 7. Other populist leaders or parties ranking on the frequency list*

Additionally the results of the analysis showed that the actors Salvini and Lega were mentioned together with Le Pen 8 times across the whole dataset and Le Pen was mentioned with the actor UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party) once.

The below table (Table 3) gives an overview of the lemma *populism* in all its occurrences across the three newspapers divided according to the presence or absence of modifiers (none, right-, left- or national-). Raw frequencies of the lemma are given in the first line, then the following lines just report percentages as to make the data comparable across the dataset components.

Word mentioned/Lemma	Helsingin Sanomat	Turun Sanomat	Aamulehti
*populis*	170	24	18
Populismi (Populism)	40% (68)	54.1% (13)	88.9% (16)
Oikeistopopulismi (Right wing populism)	57.6% (98)	45.8% (11)	11.1% (2)
Vasemmistopopulismi (Left-wing populism)	0.6% (1)	0%	0%
Kansallispopulismi (National populism)	0.6% (1)	0%	0%

Table 8. An overview of the lemma *populism* in all its occurrences across the Finnish legacy media dataset

#### 4.1.1. Collocational analysis

The conduction of the collocational analysis showed that the word *populism* seemed to attract a semantic field that clusters around the term “ääri-” (*far/extreme*): äärioikeisto (*far right*), äärintationalismi (*far right nationalism*) and ääriajattelu (*far right thinking/views*). The other top 25 collocates can be observed from the table below (Table 9).

<b>Top 25 collocates of the word <i>populism</i> in the Finnish legacy media dataset:</b>
Kansantajuinen ( <i>demotic</i> )
Suosio ( <i>popularity</i> )
Sana ( <i>word</i> )
Ohjata ( <i>to guide</i> )
Miettiä ( <i>to think</i> )
Maailmansota ( <i>world war</i> )
Kirja ( <i>a book</i> )
Kallis ( <i>expensive</i> )
Jalansija ( <i>a foothold</i> )
Riivata ( <i>to obsess, to bewitch</i> )
Keino ( <i>a mean</i> )
Kertoa ( <i>to tell</i> )
Äärioikeisto ( <i>far right</i> )
Äärinationalismi ( <i>far right nationalism</i> )
Ääriajattelu ( <i>far right thinking/views</i> )
Äänestäminen ( <i>voting</i> )
Älykäs ( <i>intelligent</i> )
Yrittää ( <i>to try</i> )
Ympärillä ( <i>around</i> )
Ymmärtää ( <i>to comprehend</i> )
Yksinkertaistava ( <i>simplifying</i> )
Ykköstavoite ( <i>number 1 objective</i> )
Yhteiskuntarakenne ( <i>social structure</i> )
Yhdistää ( <i>to unite</i> )
Ydin ( <i>core</i> )

Table 9. Top 25 Collocates of the word *populism* in the Finnish legacy media dataset.

It is noteworthy to mention that across the whole corpus of the Finnish legacy media dataset, the word “populism” appears 50% of the time as part of the compound: “oikeistopopulismi” (*right wing populism*). Another key finding in the collocation analysis was that the multiword expression that appeared the most – and which was the most relevant to this research – was the word combination “kansallismieliset puolueet” (*nationalistic parties*). The collocate has no statistical relevance, as the other relevant findings of multiword expressions were not significant (not related to societal or political issues but were merely grammatical multiword expressions of the Finnish language).

#### 4.1.2. Discourse prosody – Populist anxiety

The concordance part of the analysis abled the investigation of discourse prosody which – as has been explained in Chapter 3 - rerefers to the occurrence of words in their typical sentence contexts and thus also in discursive contexts (Jantunen 2018, 29). Without a discourse prosody (i.e., a semantic prosody) the period formed by words has only an empty meaning without its concrete meaning in language use (Sinclair 2004, 34).

As Table 1 shows; the actors/words Salvini, Le Pen, Huhtasaari, Perussuomalaiset and Lega appeared in the list of top50 most frequent words. Additionally, Halla-aho, MS5, Di Maio, Grillo and Wilders will be considered in this part of the analysis as for their significance and purposes of this research.

*Salvini*: the analysis of the discourse prosody within the Finnish legacy media reveals three major themes surrounding Salvini: his anti-EU policies in a cross-national level; his attempt to unify the anti-EU, nationalistic populist parties from all the European union countries, his own policy in Italy and his and his Lega parties association with The Russian Federation and its leader president Vladimir Putin.

The analysis shows that Salvini appears as the most active figure and populist actor amongst populist leaders in the European union. The articles tackling Salvini are underlying his attempts to unify all the other European national populists and to eventually form a unified group with them in the European union to stop – among other issues – the EU’s *dominance* over national policy and to tackle the immigration crisis which threatens all the union member states.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that these themes are mentioned – not to the extent of any greater detail – in articles which tackle the populist conference held in Milan in May 2019 and all these articles simultaneously underline the unity of different political populist actors in terms of their views on how the EU should not execute power on a national level. Other actors mentioned in these articles – which are seen as populist actors – are Le Pen, Orban, Huhtasaari and Wilders. The articles concerning Salvini’s populist conference in Milan underline his de facto leading role at the current stage of the unifying process of European national populists, without concretely dealing with actual suggestions or reports on how this possible “populist group” in the European parliament will be formed and who it’s leading figures will be. Salvini is also mentioned as the most “popular politician” of Slovakia by the Slovakian right wing nationalist SME-party (*We are Family*) as it is stated that by executing his views on immigration policy, Salvini will eventually solve all the issues regarding the challenges of immigration in Slovakia as well.

Salvini’s anti-EU-policy statements merging from the analysis handle practically immigration policy alone which goes alongside the other finding of the analysis: Salvini talks about Italian national policy issues when addressing European union policies. This suggests that Salvini uses the EU-context in order to communicate his views on issues that are related with Italian national politics alone (immigration). In terms of Salvini’s and the Lega party’s association with the Russian federation and Vladimir Putin (regarding the issue whether the Lega received financial aid from Russia), the articles covering Salvini’s responses underline his disregard towards the matter and quote him by saying that he *likes any leader of a country that puts their countries*

*national interests first* (reference to president Putin). The allegations of the relationship between Salvini and Putin are not portrayed in a favourable light.

*Le Pen*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the French populist leader rises in three different ways from the data: with her and her parties *Rassemblement Nationale* attempt to do well in the upcoming European union elections in order to promote the interests of the French people on a national level over the dominance of the European union, with her association with the Italian populist leader Matteo Salvini and the cross-national co-operation of the European populists and with her and her parties association with the Russian Federation and Vladimir Putin (referring to allegations which claim that the French populists received funds from the Russian federation).

Le Pen emerges as the leading figure of the French national populists and is reported in her own words as the only one who can challenge the French president in domestic policy as the dominance of the European union over the matters of ordinary French people. Her views are presented as anti-EU, nationalistic and strongly anti-immigration. These themes are underlined also within her association with the Italian populist leader Matteo Salvini as they are portrayed to have a close collaboration in a cross-national context in order to form an anti-EU-populist group within the European parliament by a landslide electoral victory.

According to the analysis, Le Pen presents the populist party which she is leading as a new transformed force which still underlines the nationalistic values of before, but which has gone through “rejuvenation surgery”. Le Pen and her party are portrayed as underlining this process as an essential factor in regards to their upcoming success in the EU-elections. The co-operation between the British populist party UKIP and the US-pro populist actor Steve Bannon - who served as President Trump’s (who is widely regarded as a right wing populist politician in the US) chief political strategist emerges under a light where Le Pen has rejected further co-operation even as the principal nationalistic policy views are agreed upon. In regard to connections between



the Russian federation, Le Pen admits to have openly co-operated with Putin however any economic connections between the actors are being denied. The allegations of the relationship between Le Pen and Putin are not portrayed in a favourable light.

*Huhtasaari*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that Huhtasaari as a populist actor appeared in two different ways: 1. As a populist actor communicating her political agenda and 2. With her association with another populist actor, the leader of the Italian Lega party; Matteo Salvini.

The analysis demonstrates that Huhtasaari as a populist political actor is associated with news stories about her communicating and explaining her political agenda. The political agenda of Huhtasaari consists of defending the Finnish industries, strongly opposing the European union alongside with other anti-EU and anti-immigration populist actors such as Salvini, Fidesz (ruling populist party in Hungary) and the party chair of the Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset*. In relation to other European populist actors such as Fidesz and Salvini, Huhtasaari merges in a way where she communicates with an underlining fashion how her policies are aligned with her European counterparts. The anti-EU approach of Huhtasaari manifests itself in her skeptical views on how the European union can face the challenges of climate change and how in her view “nationalistic” parties do not have to be afraid anymore. Huhtasaari underlines how her party – the Finnish *perussuomalaiset* – want to see Finland exiting the European union. Her association with Salvini emerges several times in the analysis as does the fact that Huhtasaari attended the “Populist gathering” in Milan in May 2019, hosted by all “European national populists” by Matteo Salvini. Huhtasaari is also portrayed under a challenging light in regards to European populist parties associations with the Russian federation and its leader president Putin, to which Huhtasaari only comments that there are several actors outside of Europe trying to influence European policies – not only Russia.

*Lega*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that Lega as a populist actor appeared without exceptions alongside the other populist actor of interest: Matteo Salvini. The policies of the Lega party are briefly reported from a national policy point of view (internal policy) in Italy and then shown in a broader context in what Salvini attempts to achieve with Lega in relation towards the EU, immigration policies in Italy which he portrays as flawed, as well as the immigration policies of the EU which he portrays as flawed. Lega alongside Salvini emerges as the background force of Salvini thus the Lega itself does not emerge as a topic of conversation or reporting.

*Perussuomalaiset*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset* - as a populist actor – appeared when Finnish national policies were discussed in terms of the overall popularity of the party (in May 2019 the Finnish populist party was the largest opposition party in the country). The Finnish populist party emerged from the data as the leading voice of national policy, anti-immigration, anti-EU and pro nationalistic policy. The party is being portrayed as the party with the strongest association (within the Finnish political context) to anti-immigration and conspiracy theories such as its close ties with the Russian federation and supporting its *aggressive nationalist foreign policy*. The chances and popularity of the party's candidates in the upcoming EU-elections are under speculation and their actual prospective chances of making policies according to their agenda is analysed to be more plausible if they work with their European counterparts (which they are reported to be ready to do). Other populist actors – in this case populist politicians – emerging from the data alongside the Finnish populist party are: its leading candidate in the EU-elections: Laura Huhtasaari and the party leader Jussi-Halla-aho – even as his role is not emphasized in any other way expect for him to be a charismatic speaker within the Finnish political context. Also the Italian populist leader Salvini is mentioned as the “leader of the European populists” and within this context some minor North European and other European populist actors are mentioned.

*Halla-aho*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the populist actor – leader of the Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset* – appeared in considerably less frequent manner than the other Finnish populist actor, vice chair and candidate for the European Parliament: Huhtasaari. Jussi Halla-aho appears to merge as the face of the Finnish populist party in a Finnish context, but not as the face of this particular European union election in 2019. The articles tackling the populist leader Halla-aho deal with his political rhetoric in a national context and his role in and position in Finnish national politics. Halla-aho and his party emerge as equal to their European populist counterparts as they are regarded as *progressive* and *a step ahead* in terms of using social media in political campaigning and political communication purposes. Halla-aho is portrayed in a controversial light as he is said to be the leader of one of Finland’s most Russia-critical parties, but yet he is leading his populist party to a coalition with other European populists (Lega, Rassamblement National ecc.) who have no issues with co-operating with the Russian federation and its leader president Putin.

*Movimento 5 Stelle*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the populist party – the Five Stars Movement – is portrayed as a political force in decline largely due to the unsuccessful leadership of Luigi Di Maio.

*Wilders*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the populist actor – leader of the Dutch populist party PVV – Geert Wilders appears only alongside Italy’s Salvini and not as a major populist actor within his own rights.

*Grillo and Di Maio*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the populist actors Grillo and Di Maio appear together. Di Maio is portrayed as a shooting star populist politician losing national credibility as a populist leader, but the founder of the Italian populist party Movimento 5 stelle, Grillo shows his support for his successor.

*Soini*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the populist actor Timo Soini who is the founder of the Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset* and its longest serving chair is not mentioned as a political actor, but as an author of his nonfiction book called: populism. Soini is represented as an “experience based-expert” of populism as a concept in Finland and Europe in general, but his role or relation regarding the populist party he ones founded and its current policy is not being discussed.

*Orban*: The Hungarian populist leader emerges as widely polarizing political actor who is either strongly criticized or then looked up to. His association with other European populists such as Salvini, Huhtasaari and Le Pen comes up, but he is not discussed at large on his own.

*Populism*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the lemma *populism* emerges in the data as a widely negative and threatening term. As a concept it emerges under two different categories 1. As a concept referred to reportages on politics, politicians and policies and 2. As a concept which is analysed and discussed mainly in interviews of academics and scholars.

In the first category, populism as a concept appears within topical political issues such as the political situation of Finland on a national level and within international politics. In Finland in May 2019 the populist party *perussuomalaiset* is the leader of the opposition and the second largest party represented in the national parliament. Their policies are reported within the frameworks of their themes: nationalistic values, anti-immigration and anti-EU-rhetoric. The Finnish populist party appears as the Finnish answer within the united right-wing populist front with its European populist counterparts uniting against the European union and the situation they describe as the flawed status quo. The Finnish populist party emerges as a small piece of a larger puzzle which ultimately is the European populists and their main values: anti-immigration, anti-EU and pro-national sovereignty. These issues are reported to be seeing by Finnish populists and their key actors as topical political issues nationally and globally.

The upcoming European union elections of May 2019 are forecasted to be the “widely anticipated victory” of the European populist front. The main populist actors which have been analysed above are mentioned. Other articles which are dated from the end of May 2019 (after the election) tackle the issue of the results of the populist parties and candidates across the European union – pointing out that the results were overall historically strong for the populists, but not the major victory which was anticipated. Analysis for the reasons remain short as well as shallow and focus merely on the fact that especially in Finland the European union elections traditionally have a low voter turnout.

In terms of populist policy, the analysis shows that - if successful – the new populist block could slow down political process making inside the European union and at its worst change the entire direction the EU has been evolving towards during the past two decades – a direction which is emphasized to be the opposite to what the “populists in Europe” desire. The so-called European populists are portrayed to be unofficially led by the Italian Matteo Salvini. In the very least Salvini and his Lega - with their policy agenda on the EU – are being portrayed as the example of where the European union should progress towards: reduced immigration, no-immigration, nationalist control and values, anti-EU-commission dominance over national sovereignty and acceptance and co-operation between all sovereign nations which put their own national interest first. This attempt of unification against the EU by the European populists is described as an “effort in progress” as the actual potential policy suggestions put forward by Salvini and his international supporters are being seen as unclear.

In addition, the discourse prosody shows that the unification attempt of European populists is being portrayed as somewhat shallow due to the fact that “opposing the EU” is not a strong mutual political policy – not to mention ideology – for the populists in order for them to work together inside the European parliament if victorious in the May 2019 elections.

The analysis of the discourse prosody revealed that the populist policies are being portrayed within the context explained in the previous paragraph and additionally it is underlined that the policies of Finnish populists and their

European counterparts are self-contradictory and not transparent especially towards the co-operation between the Russian federation and its leader president Putin.

The success of populist parties and policy on a global level is often being referred to and it is widely connected to far-right values often in a context where similarities on current populist policies are compared to the fascist ones in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which ultimately led to the second world war. Populism thus emerges as a cause and source of anxiety amongst people who do not support populist policies and actors and this *populist anxiety* is seen as equal to the anxiety which the fear for the global warming causes amongst people. The opposing power to populist policy which emerges from the data within the analysis of the discourse prosody is the French president Emmanuel Macron, who is being portrayed as an antidote to European populism and to all what they stand for, however the means how the French president is reported to tackle populism are also described as populist portraying the concept itself in a negative light. As a concept which is analysed and discussed mainly in interviews of academics and scholars populism emerges as a topical political concept on an international – not only Finnish – level. The actual concept is not being defined in any way thus definitions of populism do not emerge. The topical nature of the phenomena is being commented on in terms of the resent rise of right wing popular parties in Europe, Brexit and the US president Donald Trump and their reciprocal connection are taken for granted, even as it would be plausible to assume that populism and political movements or election outcomes (which certainly are not without a direct connection to populism as is the case with Brexit for example) are the results and outcomes of many different actors in very different countries.

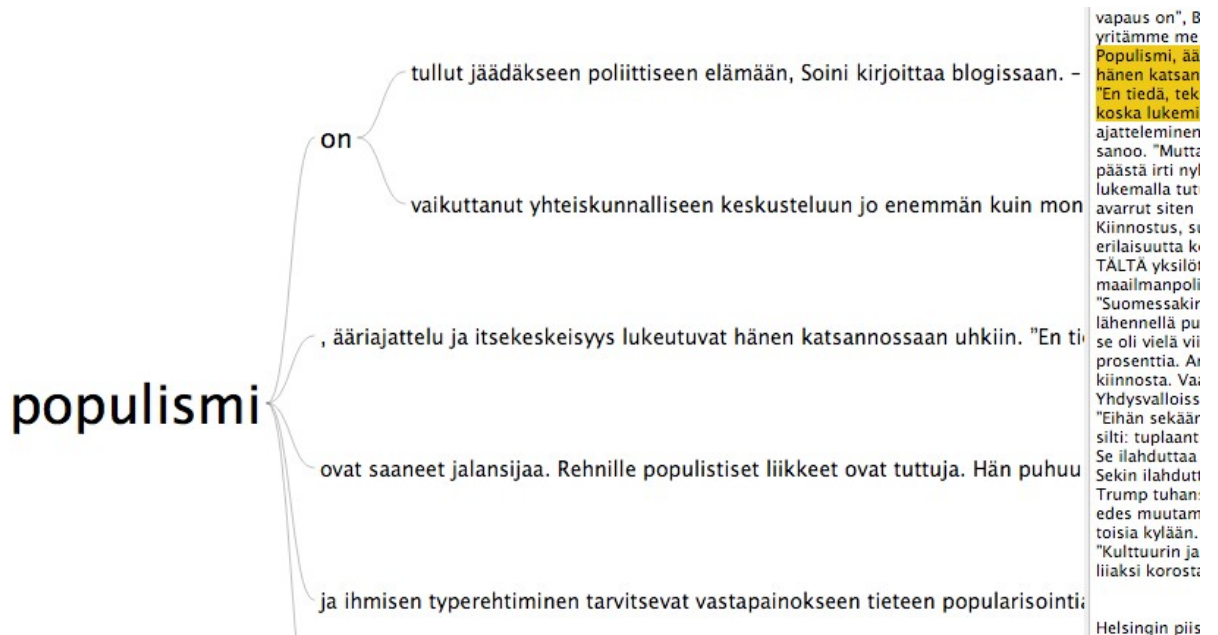
The topicality of populism is also presented in the context of the upcoming EU-election where the populist parties are professed to do well. The analysis by academics interviewed however remain rather shallow as a “general dissatisfaction towards the EU, the elites and/or old establishment parties and politicians” are being seeing as the primary causes fuelling the success of populists. It is also noteworthy to mention that even as the term populism itself

is not being defined – it is being regarded as a complex phenomenon which cannot be understood only through simple explanations. The discourse prosody analysis however shows that the explanations rising from the data set are general and remain at a level which describe policy issues with a couple of words such as anxiety about immigration, anxiety about the future and anxiety about the continuity of western values. One journalistic interview of an academic offers a point of view which emphasizes how populism does not only appeal to a certain group of people but rather appeals to very primitive emotions of different kinds of people. As interesting as this finding of the discourse prosody is, it has to be noted that it is only one paragraph emerging from a larger dataset, by one person who does not elaborate on that statement any further.

The results of the discourse prosody analysis showed that even as populism is being explained in interviews mainly by academics who attempt to remain objective, as a whole populism and right-wing populism are seen as somewhat negative concepts at their best. Thus as many possible causes for the rise of right wing populism are explained with the “one or two word- way” explained in the previous paragraph – with the emphasis that the motives behind voting for populists are possibly just as legit and acceptable as the existing of certain populist forces – it is also being criticized for simplifying policies and potentially exaggeration certain dangerous and threats which the populist tend to emphasize such as the loss of national sovereignty over EU-rule and the so called dangers of immigration.

As has been discussed before: the conduction of the collocational analysis showed that the word *populism* seemed to attract a semantic field that clusters around the term “ääri-” (*far/extreme*): äärioikeisto (*far right*), äärinationalismi (*far right nationalism*) and ääriajattelu (*far right thinking/views*). Also the analysis of the discourse prosody revealed that populism as a concept was strongly associated with the term far right and the historical connection to far right-policies in Europe are emphasized. Left wing populism is mentioned as an existing concept, but it is not analyzed or tackled with any further. It is also mentioned in extracts where right wing populists attack left wing policies. The

concept of populism also emerged throughout the dataset several times alongside with Timo Soini - the founder of the Finnish populist party perussuomalaiset – and the context every single article was the book he would be writing about populism as he is being portrayed as an expert on the topic. Any definitions or explanations on what populism actually is do not emerge.



Picture 1 The visualization of discourse prosody whilst analysing the Finnish legacy media data with MAXQDA.

#### 4.2. Twitter: Finland

In the analysis of word frequencies, the function words such as prepositions ecc. were excluded from the search in order to obtain a functioning lemmatized list. In this part of the analysis, a simple word frequency list was extracted - excluding function words - and it was capped to the first 350 most frequent words in the corpus of the Twitter dataset. The table below (Table 10), gathers the most significant items divided by functional categories drawn from the data itself, each item is presented alongside its normalized frequency per 1000 words. Frequency per 1000 words given the size of the corpus (1 150423) this will make the lexical items more comparable. The choice of the lexical items is based on its relevance to the



purposes of this research and their frequency of occurrence throughout the dataset. Under the category of institutions are included those tools enabling political participation that are above political affiliation.

The below table (Table 11) gives an overview of the lemma *populism* in all its occurrences across the Finnish Twitter dataset, divided according to the presence or absence of modifiers (none, right-, left- or national-). Raw frequencies of the lemma are given in the first line, then the following lines just report percentages as to make the data comparable across the dataset components.

Countries/Regions		People		Institutions		Politics	
items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w
Eurooppa (Europe)	6.5	Orpo	1.3	Puolue (Party)	0.4	Populismi (Populism)	1
Suomi (Finland)	5.5	Halla-aho	0.8	Parlamentti (Parliament)	1.8	Perussuomalaiset/persut/ps (The Finns party)	3.2
Finland	1.6	Niinistö V.	0.8	EP (European Parliament)	1.9	Vihreät (The Green party)	3.4
Venäjä (Russia)	0.5	Huhtasaari	0.7	Äänestäminen (Voting)	10.1	SDP/demarit (Social democrats)	1.9
Helsinki	0.4	Hautala	0.8	Unioni (Union)	0.4	EPP (European Peoples Party)	0.9
		Virkkunen	0.7	Politiikka (Politics)	1.1	Kokoomus/kok (The central coalition party)	3.9
		Pietikäinen	0.7	Results	0.4	Keskusta/kesk (The center party)	1.4
		Modig	0.6	Vote	0.4	EU (European union)	15.7
		Salla	0.5	Kannattaa (To support)	0.9	Eurowahl	0.6
		Lokka	0.5	YLE (Finnish broadcasting network)	1.9	Euelections	1.5
		Haavisto	0.5			Eurooppapäivä (Europe day)	0.8
		Kumpula-Natri	0.4			Vas/Vasemmistoliitto (Left alliance)	0.4
		Sipilä	0.4			Alde	0.7
		Tikkanen	0.4			RKP (Swedish People's Party of Finland)	0.3
		Hakkarainen	0.4			KDPUOLUE (Christian democrats)	0.8
		Aho	0.7			Piraattipuolue (Pirate party)	0.5
						Ilmasto/Ilmastonmuutos (Climate/Climatechange)	2.9
						Vasemmisto (The left)	0.8
						Meppi (Member of EU-Parliament)	0.7
						Ehdokas (Candidate)	1.5
						Presidency	0.5
						Hallitusneuvottelut (Government negotiations)	0.5
						Brexit	0.5
						Left	0.4
						Eurovaaliehdokas (EU-election candidate)	0.4
						Vaalitenti (Election debate panel)	0.3
						Pienpuoluetenti (Debate of the small parties)	0.3

Table 10. Finnish Twitter data: items divided by functional categories



Word mentioned/Lemma	Finnish Twitter dataset
*populis*	1159
Populismi (Populism)	78,7% (912)
Oikeistopopulismi (Right wing populism)	20,2% (234)
Vasemmistopopulismi (Left-wing populism)	0.09% (1)
Kansallispopulismi (National populism)	1,03% (12)

Table 11. An overview of the lemma populism in all its occurrences across the Finnish Twitter dataset

#### 4.2.1. Collocational analysis -Twitter

The conduction of the collocational analysis showed that the word *populism* seemed to attract a semantic field that clusters around the concepts EU/The European Union and Europe in two different forms. The other top 25 collocates can be observed from the table below (Table 12).

<b>Top 25 collocates of the word <i>populism</i> in the Finnish Twitter dataset:</b>
EU-vaalit (EU-elections)
EU (The European union)
Lääke (medicine)
Työpaikka (A job)
Nousu (The rise)
Äärioikeisto (Far right)

Paras (The best)
Ihmiset (People)
Vihreät ( <i>The Green (party)</i> )
Euroopassa (In Europe)
Väärinkäyttö ( <i>Misuse</i> )
Varoitukset (Warnings)
Valmius (readiness/standby)
Valta (Power)
Vihreä ( <i>Green (politician)</i> )
Saksan (Germanys)
Paljastus (Unveiling)
Kärkipoliitikko (Top politician)
Korruptio ( <i>Corruption</i> )
AFD (Alternative for Germany)
Vaalien (Of the elections)
Vastaaan ( <i>Against</i> )
Hautala ( <i>Finnish green EU politician</i> )
Tuloksesta (From the result)
Eurooppa (Europe)

*Table 12. top 25 Collocates of the word populism in the Finnish Twitter dataset.*

It is noteworthy to mention that the among the top25 collocates the concept *äärioikeisto* (far right) emerges both from the Finnish Twitter data as well as the Finnish legacy media (see Chapter 4.1.2.). These findings will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

#### *4.2.2 Discourse prosody – Twitter “The European Union cannot become the playfield of populists”*

The discourse prosody part of the analysis reveals how the lemma *populism* emerges from the tweets of twitter-users. Among the major part of tweets were the concept of populism is discussed; it emerges as a widely negative term.

A frequently discussed topic among the tweets concerning populism under a negative light is the so called Ibiza-scandal and how according to the people tweeting about it, the scandal reveals the lack of morality of European populists (The Ibiza-scandal was triggered on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2019, concerning the corruption accusations of the Austrian populist party: Freedom party, FPÖ – *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*). The twitter conversations around this issue draw parallels between the FPÖ-party, European populists and the Finnish populist party – in other words they are regarded as a different version of the same concept: bad/negative populism and populists.

In a similar fashion the connections of the Finnish populist party, but also the European counterparts within their relation to the Russian federation and its leader president Putin are discussed widely. The populists are merging as invaluable assistants to Putin's Russia and thus causing a great deal of harm. Both the Ibiza-scandal and the *Russia*-factor are being tweeted about as proof that the populists – regardless of nationality – are not playing with open cards and are thus untrustworthy. The untrustworthy of populisms and their so called “incoherence” is tweeted about in terms of the fact that populists want to portray themselves as nationalists, but are “flirting” with the likes of President Putin's Russia and other corrupt elements of politics. “*Missä vesissä oikeistopopulistit liikkuvat... Ei anneta tulevaisuutta populistien käsiin*” (“In which waters are the populists sailing – let's not surrender our future in to the hands of populists”) – were two tweets which embodied the discussions surrounding these two topics rather accurately.

On a wider level outside of the detailed topics of the Ibiza-scandal or Russia, populism emerges as a concept which is seen as greatly inconsistent and as something which goes hand in hand with right-wing thinking and extreme conservative gender values. Populism is seen to be supported by frenzy nationalists and the word *haittapopulismi* (harm populism), is being

used which indicates that perhaps populism itself can also be a positive concept. National security just as the overall security of European nations within the European union are also being tweeted about in a fashion where populists - especially with an emphasis on right wing populists – are seen as a great risk factor. Populists are also referred to as a great threat to the European intelligence community as they are portrayed as actors who disregard cooperation with untrustworthy nations or political actors. Populism and fascism are mentioned together under this context as well as the wide risk that populism causes to the rule of law in democracies.

The relation between the media and populism is also discussed under a critical light in tweets which emphasize how the populists attempt to influence the traditional media and how media and populism are attached together. Under these topics populism is – as mentioned – emerging as a widely negative concept from the Finnish twitter data set and a particular tweet which underlines how: “The European Union cannot become the playfield of populists”, does embody the overall twitter conversations around the topic illustratively. The pro-European collaboration politics conducted by the EU emerge as a counter force for the so called *harm populism*. The most concrete against populism is offered in a chain of thought which underlines how guaranteeing employment to citizens will work as a *medicine against populism*. The only tweet which offers a tweeters view on the root cause of populism (what creates it and what makes people support populism), explains it as the fear for the future; *tulevaisuudenpelko*.

The distinct minority of twitter conversations which portrayed populism as a positive concept and thus support it are anti-EU-voices on an international level and anti-elite/anti-establishment voices on a national level. On a larger international level populism is seen as the only answer and solution to the problems of today (which are however not specified), and populists will be the only ones who can bring *a real change* in Europe. Controversially to this: being pro-EU is seen as the “wrong way to tackle populism” and in itself populist (controversial in terms of understanding whether populism should be regarded as a positive or a negative concept). In a similar fashion another anti-

EU take is a topic where tweets deal with the EU-policies which tackle climate change and are criticized for being “climate populism”. On a more anti-establishment and national level populists are being rooted for as the actors who propose a *truly progressive social policy* (unlike establishment parties) and this is also seen as the foundation of their success.

The two minor cases in which populism emerged as purely neutral concept from the twitter data, was in tweets which simply mentioned that populism has gained ground in other European countries (without emphasizing whether this is a positive or a negative thing) and in tweets (dated towards the end of May) which commented on the EU-parliament election results stating that even as populists gained ground they did not win with a landslide victory. The negative tone of those tweets reporting these electoral results were directed towards the result forecasts which were proven to be partly wrong.

*Perussuomalaiset*: the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset* - as a populist actor emerged strongly under either a very positive or a very negative light. Hence – the Finnish populist party is a polarizing actor within the Finnish Twitter.

The twitter tweets centralizing around the actor *perussuomalaiset* from a positive standpoint concentrate around the issues of freedom of speech, the rights of white working men, “harmful”-immigration, how the European union and Europe in general needs strong borders. It is being underlined how the populist party does not oppose the concept of Europe, but the European union and how the EU does not mean internationality, and how Europe does not mean the European union. The supportive twitter discourse also emphasizes how the Finnish populist party has come to stay and will keep shaping politics in the future both on a national and international (EU-level). The tweets before and after the EU-parliament elections are panting in their nature on how the *perussuomalainen*-party will win big and afterwards: how they have proven to be an important player now on an international level as well. The tweets revolving around the coming elections by the twitter users which regard the populist party under a positive light are boosting and optimistic.



The elements which underline both the polarization of the perussuomalaiset as an actor on Twitter, but also how the same issues are either regarded as positive or negative is manifested in its most clearest form in the way how one of the most controversial political campaigns added by the Finnish populist party (their youth wing) is being discussed. A tweet which says “*Jotta tulevaisuutemme ei näyttäisi tältä*”/”*So that our future would not look like this*” (the tweet is accompanied with a picture of a multicultural couple with a baby), caused volumes of heated discussion both by Twitter users defending the ad and its message referring to it as an appropriate prophesy of an “unwanted society” as well as other Twitter users condemning the relay as it can be perceived as racist and insensitive. In addition analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that by their supporters the perussuomalaiset emerge as a underdog of the election, fighting for the Finnish people as an anti-establishment counterpower, strongly opposing the current immigration policies of both Finland on a national level and the ones of EU on an international one as well as loudly criticizing the policies against climate change which are being perceived as a hysterical exaggeration. The so called fight against the underdog is referred to by some Twitter users as: “*Meidän sota, jossa puolustamme Suomea*”/”*our war, in which we defend Finland*” and strong emphasis is given to the demand for the EU to respect nation states.

The voices in the tweets which oppose the populist actor perussuomalaiset according to the analysis of the discourse prosody, mainly underline the advantages of the EU and Finland’s role in it. The perussuomalaiset are seen as much in the negative light as the concept of populism is (see previous subchapter). As populism is seen as a widely negative concept – equally the populist party is seen as one. The rationale behind the criticism does not change in any significant way and the only differences which rise from the discourse prosody analysis are the tweets where something more particular is being discussed. Examples of these are certain populist actors such as Halla-aho and Huhtasaari as their policies are being criticized for being incoherent, irresponsible, anti-human rights and dishonest. The rationale for these arguments inside the tweets vary from already discussed topics such as:

connections to Russia, corruption within populist parties in general and controversial policy. The Finnish populist party is being referred to as a *haittapuolue*/harmful party and some analysis emerges where twitter users ponder about how the leader of the time Jussi Halla-aho took the *perussuomalainen*-party after taking it over from its founder Timo Soini, and moved it radically to the right, making it a “proper” PRR (populist radical right)-party just as its European peers.

*Halla-aho*: The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the Finnish populist party leader emerges in a light where his tv-appearances and radio or newspaper interviews are widely quoted and further elaborated. Terms he has made infamous such as *turvapaikkashoppailu/asylum-shopping* and *vihervasemmisto/the green left* are being used in tweets which support him and his policies in addition to a statement where he claims that the *green left* has taken upon the role of being the useful idiots of Islam.

Halla-aho is also being a topic of twitter-discussion due to a panel meeting he will attend, organized by a Christian association which is widely seen as a part of a Finnish institution that promotes human rights among other things. The presence of Halla-aho rises polarized tweets between twitter users who either 1) support his policies and thus think he should be allowed to take part; 2) do not support his policies and object to the fact that someone of his stature will be given an audience in such a context; and 3) do not support his policies, but subscribe to the values of “free speech” and as a direct consequence do not see the presence of the populist leader as an issue.

*Islam*: The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the word Islam emerges within an additional topic where immigration policies are criticized on a general level. The Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset* are being praised for their policies of anti-Islamization and for being the only Finnish party which has coherently stood behind this policy. Anti-Islamization as a concept is not being defined in these tweets that emerge from the analysis, but the rationale behind opposing the religion are “women’s rights”. Tweets of this

nature have their counterparts where the so-called intolerant rhetoric is being criticized and it is being pointed out that Islam and people practicing the religion have lived in Europe for centuries.

*Huhtasaari:* The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the Finnish populist party vice chair and European election candidate emerges under a rather similar light as the party leader Jussi Halla-aho; certain takes from given statements are further shared and elaborated on and they are either praised or criticized. The tweets supporting Huhtasaari are simpler in their content: supportive of her policies and her personality which is seen as “unapologetic”. Her views which are in line with those of her party (Perussuomalaiset) and its leader (Halla-aho), are nearly celebrated among twitter users who support her.

An interesting finding that emerged from the analysis was that those tweets that strongly criticized Huhtasaari were more critical towards her conduct and personality rather than her policies. Huhtasaari is criticized on twitter for stating “half-truths” or for “causing a headache” whenever she opens her mouth. In tweets that criticize the populist actor Huhtasaari in a more appropriate and polite manner, the focus is on her perceived incompetence and unreadiness in regard of societal and governmental issues especially on an international level. Huhtasaari is also criticized in a tweet (interestingly written in English) where “EU” is being warned about her being a “Orban lover”, evolution denialist and a person who has been caught for plagiarizing her master’s thesis.

The tweets tweeted after the EU-parliamentary elections (the end of May2019) are of two nature: people who (either do or do not support her) strongly find it amusing that she has been elected as an MEP (member of the European parliament) and of those who are appalled and ashamed of the same fact.

*Salvini:* The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the Italian populist leader is referred to mainly as an European populist actor who is gathering his allies to Milan (including Finnish populist actors) and his name is

sometimes mentioned as a hashtag (#salvini) by twitter users with anti-immigration sympathies in order to show support to what is perceived as a similar take on his policies. Salvini thus emerges as a “spokesperson” for anti-immigration and as an actor which divides opinions. However, the tweets which emerge from the analysis of the discourse prosody are “informative and repetitive ones” in their nature, not ones which show strong support or opposing. Salvini as a populist actor also emerges together with other minor populist actors as well as with his party the Lega. Salvini was mentioned in the most negative light in a re-tweet of a mediahouse article which reported that the Pope Francis I refused to meet with the populist leader and wished for him to lose in the upcoming election. Salvini was also indirectly referred to as a fascist (see next paragraph).

*Lega:* The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the populist actor Lega emerges always together with its leader Salvini. The Lega is mentioned in tweets which are (like Salvini, see the previous paragraph) more informative ones than controversial ones. Only a small amount of critical voices emerged against Lega except for one where the party and its politicians was referred to as fascist and against human rights (a reference to the Lega policy takes on the immigrants crossing the Mediterranean). Lega was mentioned in a neutral light in tweets commenting on their electoral results (possible and actual before and after the election).

*Di Maio and Grillo:* appeared 0 times in the Finnish twitter data.

*Movimento 5 Stelle:* appeared in tweets which reported the downfall of the populist movement and commented on their electoral score. The tone of the tweets was informative rather than negative or positive.

*Le Pen:* The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the French populist actor was only mentioned within tweets reporting about the possible election results regarding her and her populist party and about the “conference of European populists” in Milan hosted by the Italian populist leader Salvini.

Le Pen was also mentioned in another tweet report about a separate gathering of Finnish and European populists in Tallin, Estonia. The tone of these tweets is neutral and informative except for a small number of tweets mentioning Le Pen's connections to Russia (and thus indirectly the collaboration of Finnish populists to Le Pen).

*Wilders*: the Dutch populist leader appears on tweets which mention his presence with other European populists in Milan.

*Orban*: The Hungarian populist leader emerges from the data set either in the company of other European populists or then as a reference point on what "too much populism can lead to". The latter is perceived both under a negative and positive light – depending on the assumed political preferences of the twitter user.

#### *4.3. Legacy Media: Italy*

In the analysis of word frequencies, the function words such as prepositions ecc. were excluded from the search in order to obtain a functioning lemmatized list. In this part of the analysis, a simple word frequency list was extracted - excluding function words - and it was capped to the first 400 most frequent words in the corpus. The table below (Table 13), gathers the most significant items divided by functional categories drawn from the data itself, each item is presented alongside its normalized frequency per 1000 words. Frequency per 1000 words given the size of the corpus (74 873) this will make the lexical items more comparable. The choice of the lexical items is based on its relevance to the purposes of this research and their frequency of occurrence throughout the dataset. Under the category of institutions are included those tools enabling political participation that are above political affiliation.

Countries/Regions		People		Institutions		Politics	
items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w
Europ* (Europa, europee, europeo, europea, europei) ( <i>Europe</i> )	4.8	Salvini (22% with first name)	2	Ministro (Ministry)	0.9	Populis* (populismo) ( <i>Populism</i> )	2.2
Ital* (Italia, italiano, italiana)	2.8	Di Maio	0.7	Presidente (The President)	0.8	Politic*(politica, politici, politiche) ( <i>Politicians</i> )	2.9
Paes* (paese, paesi) ( <i>Country</i> )	2	Popolo ( <i>The people</i> )	0.6	UE (EU)	0.7	Governo ( <i>Government</i> )	1.8
Mondo ( <i>The world</i> )	0.8	Cittadini ( <i>Citizens</i> )	0.5	Parlamento (The Parliament)	0.5	Lega ( <i>The Lega-party</i> )	1.1
Città ( <i>City</i> )	0.8	Società ( <i>Society</i> )	0.4	Istituzioni (Institutions)	0.5	Elezioni ( <i>Elections</i> )	1.3
Germania ( <i>Germany</i> )	0.6	Donne ( <i>Women</i> )	0.4	Repubblica (Republic)	0.4	Elettorale ( <i>electoral</i> )	0.7
Milano ( <i>Milan</i> )	0.4	Francesco (43% the pope)	0.3	Università (University)	0.4	Elettori ( <i>Voters</i> )	0.4
Roma ( <i>Rome</i> )	0.3	Vicepremier	0.3	Cultura (Culture)	0.4	Vot*(voti, votare) ( <i>To vote</i> )	0.7
Napoli ( <i>Naples</i> )	0.3	Berlusconi	0.3	Famiglia ( <i>Family</i> )	0.3	Urne ( <i>Ballots</i> )	0.3
		Sindaco ( <i>Mayor</i> )	0.3	Diritto ( <i>Right</i> )	0.3	Partit* (partito, partiti) ( <i>Party</i> )	2
		Renzi (15% with first name)	0.3			Democra* (democrazia, democratico) ( <i>Democracy</i> )	1.3
		Zingaretti	0.3			Sinistra ( <i>Left</i> )	1
		Premier ( <i>Primeminister</i> )	0.3			Destra ( <i>Right</i> )	1
						PD ( <i>Democratic party</i> )	0.9
						Campagna ( <i>Campaign</i> )	0.7
						Fascis* (fascism, fascista)	0.9
						Movimento (not only MS5) ( <i>Movement</i> )	0.6
						Potere ( <i>Power</i> )	0.6
						Brexit	0.5
						Fronte ( <i>The Front</i> )	0.5
						Unione (Not only EU)	0.4
						*migran* (migrant, immigrazione) ( <i>Immigrants, immigration</i> )	0.7
						Sovranisti ( <i>Sovereigns</i> )	0.4
						Diritti ( <i>Rights</i> )	0.4
						Liberale ( <i>Liberal</i> )	0.3
						Risultato (not only “electoral”) ( <i>Results</i> )	0.3
						Nazionalismo ( <i>Nationalism</i> )	0.3

Table 13. Italian Legacy media: items divided by functional categories

The table below (Table 14) gives an overview of the lemma *populism* in all its occurrences across the three newspapers. Raw frequencies of the lemma are given in the first line, then the following lines just report percentages as to make the data comparable across the dataset components.

Word mentioned/lemma	<b>La repubblica</b>	<b>Il corriere</b>	<b>Il giornale</b>
populis*	177	74	1
Populismo (noun) (Populism)	64% (113)	66% (49)	100%
Populist* (adj)	36% (64)	34% (25)	0

*Table 14. An overview of the lemma populism in all its occurrences across the Italian legacy media dataset*

It is noteworthy to mention that the lemma *populism* only occurs once from the dataset which consists of legacy media articles from the perceived right wing newspaper *Il Giornale*. It can be assumed that articles covering populists and populist politicians and issues related to these concepts are covered under other terms. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

#### *4.3.1. Collocational analysis: Italian Legacy Media*

The conduction of the collocational analysis showed that the word *populism* seemed to attract a semantic field that clusters around various negatively loaded words. The other top 25 collocates can be observed from the table below (Table 15).

**Top 25 collocates of the word *populism* in the Italian legacy media dataset:**

Russi (Russians)
Nascono ( <i>They are born</i> )
Misurarsi (To measure oneself)
Vulnerabile (Vulnerable)
Volgo (People)
Volgendo (Turn to)
Velenoso (Poisonous)
Vele (Sails)
Veicolata (Transmitted)
Variante ( <i>Variant</i> )
Variabili ( <i>Variables</i> )
Varco ( <i>Opening</i> )
Ultrareazionaria ( <i>Ultra conservative</i> )
Tronfio ( <i>Pompous</i> )
Trionfato (Triumphed)
Tribalismo ( <i>Tribalismo</i> )
Trasformarsi (To transform oneself)
Tipico (Typical)
Tigre ( <i>Tiger</i> )
Tenace ( <i>Tenacious</i> )
Svizzera (Swiss)
Sviscera (To explore)
Suprematismo (Supremacist)
Superbia (Pride)
Stufi (Fed up)

Table 15. Top 25 Collocates of the word populism in the Italian legacy media dataset.



Taking a closer look at some of the collocates, it is relevant to note that they suggest a rather negative prosody which is confirmed once the concordance lines of those items are analyzed further. Such as these appearing on the top 25 list are the collocates such as; *volgo*, *sviscera*, *tribalismo*, *tronfio*, *velenoso* and *ultrareazionaria*. The discourse prosody part of the analysis reveals more about these collocates and further on they will be discussed in Chapter 5.

#### 4.3.2. Discourse prosody – Populismo (col Rolex)

*Salvini* and *Lega*: the analysis of the discourse prosody within the Italian legacy media reveals that Salvini - as a populist actor - is inseparable of the party he leads; Lega. His policies and political persona as well as his party, emerge either under a strongly critical or then a rather approving light. The difference is clear as the more centrist *Corriere della Sera* and leftist *La Repubblica*-newspapers present Salvini and his party negatively whereas the right-wing *Il Giornale* has a more “reportative” aspect on Salvini which can also be seen as an endorsement. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5: Discussion of the results.

Salvini – as the leader of the Lega – emerges mainly under two categories: 1) domestic policy issues within Italy and 2) on the international level, as the de facto populist leader of the European populists. Under both categories however the same policy issues emerge: mainly immigration, anti-EU, anti-establishment and being for the people (the anti-establishment part can be seen as a controversial concept as Salvini and Lega were in government in 2019), see Chapter 5: Discussion of the results).

The image which emerges of the discourse prosody analysis about Salvini and the Lega do not differ in the general theme presented earlier in Chapter 4.1.2. Salvini as the leader of the Lega and the Interior minister emerges as a political actor which executes strong domestic policies in terms of immigration and the rights of the citizens he refers to as the *Italian people*, and on a more international level where he aims to unite the European populists against the

supranational policies of the European union which according to him do not respect the right of nation states.

Salvini is leading his party into the European elections and he emerges as a confident, unapologetic and boastful political actor. Salvini's goal on an European level is to form a group within the EU-parliament, consisting of other pro-national, anti-EU, anti-immigration populists. Salvini's policies emerge as an attempt to "change the EU from within and not oppose it from the outside". Salvini's takes on the Italian immigration policy (which he is leading as the minister of internal affairs) are widely portrayed as divisive and questioned within the parameters of international law (as in dealing with asylum seekers).

The issues on immigration rise – as other aspects of Salvini as well – on both a domestic Italian level as a wider European one; the problem of the *immigration crisis* in Italy is also the fault as it is the problem of the EU – according to the narrative and rhetoric of Salvini. As his stances on immigration are widely criticized by other more traditional political actors and commentators it is noteworthy to mention that several articles emerged from the data where also the head of the Roman Catholic church – Pope Francis – flagrantly rated the populist actors views and values as *anti-Christian* and immoral adding that he hopes that the Lega alongside its leader will not be successful in the coming EU-elections. The Italian populist actor Salvini is additionally widely associated with other European populist actors as well as domestic ones and his party's associations (and therefor his) with the Russian federation and its leader president Putin are reported upon under a critical light.

The key difference to the image of Salvini and his party which emerges from the discourse prosody analysis of the Finnish data set, has not to do with the overall image, but with the detail and volume of either approval or disapproval which Salvini is portrayed under. His political personality as well as his party emerge either under a very critical light or under one that is moderately more approving. Salvini is openly called as inhumane and dishonest or then as coherent and driven. This can be explained by the fact that Salvini in Italy is a "domestic" political actor – not a foreign one, and due to

the fact that the media environment is more divided in Italy. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

As mentioned, Salvini's policies and plans for the future also emerge under a more approving light and his political tactics are regarded as successful ones, and a point is being made out that other European populists (for example Farage from the UK) should learn from him. When asked about being a fascist by a reporter of the BBC (British broadcasting company) Salvini's answer emerges from the Italian legacy media dataset as follows: "*Fascists are the ghosts of the past – we are creating a Europe of the future*". Salvini and his party emerge from the data in reports which concentrate on the electoral victory of the Lega in the EU elections of May 2019: first party in Italy with 34% of the vote share.

*Populism:* The results of the discourse prosody analysis reveal that the concept of populism emerges only under a widely negative light. The fact that the analysis shows such one-sided results can partly be explained by the nature of the media environment of Italy. The legacy media actors which are more disapproving or widely disapproving of populism and populist actors are "overrepresented" in the dataset. As can be observed from Table 14, the *lemma* populism appears in the Italian legacy media dataset from the right-wing newspaper *Il Giornale* only once.

This does not mean that politics within the subject area of populism are not discussed or that perceived populist actors do not emerge. In its simplest it means that this newspaper uses another term when describing populist policies and populist actors, such as: *sovranisti* (sovereigns) and *nationalisti* (nationalists). In addition, this means that if approval towards the so called populist policies, populist actors or populism as a concept is shown, it does not emerge under the lemma/term: *populism*. This in itself is a key finding of this research and is telling on how the concept of populism is perceived and how it is used. This finding will be elaborated further on in Chapter 5.

Under the self-explanatory critical light under which the concept of populism within populist actors emerge, it is portrayed as an "ideology" or

means of politics which manifests itself on a practical level of being incoherent, dishonest and self-contradictory. The incoherency of populist actors are reported mainly on a domestic policy level, but also on a European one as the aim of the European populists to “unite under international co-operation within the EU in order to fight the international EU” are being criticized as incoherent as well as self-contradictory. The dishonesty of the populist actors emerges from the analysis within the context of being opportunistic policy executors, immoral policy implementers in terms of immigration and dishonest with their accused connections to the Russian federation and its leader president Putin. As has been discussed in Chapter 4.3.1., words like *poisonous*, *ultraconservative* and *pompous* were ones that were frequently bound to the word populism.

Populism as a concept explained, emerges from the Italian legacy media through the populist actors - not as much as a concept that is being discussed in itself. It is being criticized for being a chameleon-like ideology as its practices (populist actors) are accused of changing policy stances according how the current situation will serve their *power-seeking* purposes the best. The criticism of populism is illuminated in the way how populist actors such as Salvini, Di Maio and Grillo are referred to.

One article emerging from the dataset attempts more analytically to explain populism as to what it is and why it gains support – even as it is critical. In this article populism is explained as the following: “...*the art of offering simple solutions to complex problems (and therefore difficult to face)*...”. The rationale behind the temptation of populism is explained in the way how populism seems to offer a sense of comfort in a world which is changing shape every single day and this sense of comfort lies in the promise of elaborating on nostalgia – a past time when things were simpler and good for the people. Even as this is only one take that emerges from the analysis – it is a relevant one as it collates with the academic literature on populism presented in Chapter 1 of this research.

In terms of populist policy being realized, the analysis of the discourse prosody shows that the rights of women, sexual minorities and immigrants are

called in to question as populism emerges as a combination of nationalism and fundamental religious beliefs. Populism is mentioned in reports on an international level, but a distinction of populism (for example between Italy and Spain or Italy, France vs. The Netherlands) does not emerge; whatever populism is, it is perceived as the same thing globally.

*Le Pen:* The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the French populist leader appears in three different contexts. 1) in collaboration with Salvini and other European populists; 2) in articles tackling domestic policy in France and 3) in relation to the collaboration of her party and the Russian federation and its leader president Putin. All of these three contexts are also in a direct connection to what has been said about the EU.

In the first context Le Pen emerges in a light where she is strongly aligned with other European populists led unofficially by Italy's populist leader Salvini and their activities are reported under a strongly critical light which emphasizes the dangers of populists and the contradictions in their actions: uniting internationally to fight against the EU's internationality. The domestic policy on the French republic tackles Le Pen as a voice of the opposition and an alternative to the policies current president Macron. The term Frexit (France's exit of the EU) is also mentioned. The connections of Le Pen and the Russian president Putin (as well as the US one; president Trump) are noted under a critical light.

Le Pen as a populist actor appears under a more positive light in articles from the Italian magazine *Il Giornale*, where her association with Salvini and his national policies are also reported on. However the policies of the *sovranisti* (not mentioned as populists) are not accompanied with a critical tone.

*Wilders:* The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the Dutch populist leader emerges from the set only in association with other populist actors such as Salvini and Le Pen – they are being portrayed as populist leaders of their own individual countries with the same goal in terms of EU-policy.

Wilders as his European counterparts are opposing the supranational-tendencies of the EU and want to underline national sovereignty of individual European countries. Salvini and Wilders are referred to as right wing actors with strong xenophobic-tendencies. Wilders is also associated with sharing same values with the Hungarian leader Orban and the *Visegrád*-group of which he is a prominent figure of at an European stage. Orban and Wilders are both seen as political actors who loudly oppose Islam and are willing to protect what they refer to as *traditional family values*.

*Di Maio*: The analysis of the discourse prosody showed that the populist leader of the Five Star Movement does not emerge through a certain patten of topics surrounding him, but they are overall negative. He is being accused of bad leadership within a domestic context and a less important figure within the unofficial “populist duo” which is him and the leader of the Lega; Salvini. Di Maio emerges as an incoherent politician who *talks about the dignity of workers on the social media and is dressed as a labour-politician (laburista)*. His political party (despite its position in the government still in 2019) does not emerge as a particularly strong playmaker – nor domestically or on an European level.

*Grillo*: The analysis of the discourse prosody revealed that the former prominent figure of the Italian M5S-Five star movement is portrayed as a less important player in politics on a domestic and international level. Grillo is reported to subscribe to European values and his pleas in order for people to respect institutions and rules emerge from the data. Grillo is also presented under a critical light where his integrity as a politician is being put to question and he is referred to being a part of *populismo (col Rolex)* – populism with a rolex.

*Movimento 5 Stelle*: The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the Italian populist party emerges under a critical light. The populist party is being reported to be a movement which should be *running to repair* the mistakes

done by itself. The party is being referred to as a flop and its leader Di Maio emerges together with the other Italian populist party Lega as well as with its leader Salvini. In these findings of the analysis both of them are being criticized as dishonest politicians who “*speak of the people, but only want power*”.

#### 4.4. Twitter: Italy

In the analysis of word frequencies, the function words such as prepositions ecc. were excluded from the search in order to obtain a functioning lemmatized list. In this part of the analysis, a simple word frequency list was extracted - excluding function words - and it was capped to the first 500 most frequent words in the corpus of the Twitter dataset. The table below (Table 16), gathers the most significant items divided by functional categories drawn from the data itself, each item is presented alongside its normalized frequency per 1000 words. Frequency per 1000 words given the size of the corpus (318 550) this will make the lexical items more comparable. The choice of the lexical items is based on its relevance to the purposes of this research and their frequency of occurrence throughout the dataset. Under the category of institutions are included those tools enabling political participation that are above political affiliation.

Countries/Regions		People		Institutions		Politics	
items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w
Europ* (Europa, europeo, europei) ( <i>Europe</i> )	34.2	Salvini	1.5	EU	3.7	Elezioni europee, ( <i>Eu elections</i> )	5.5
Ital* (Italia,italiani, italiano, italiana, italiane) ( <i>Italy</i> )	2.9	Giovani ( <i>Youth</i> )	0.5	Diritt* (diritti, diritto) ( <i>Rights</i> )	0.5	Elezioni ( <i>Elections</i> )	1.2
Milano ( <i>Milan</i> )	0.4	Berlusconi	0.3	Parlamento ( <i>Parliament</i> )	0.4	Lega, legasalvini, leganord	1.2
Roma ( <i>Rome</i> )	0.3	Sindaco, sindaca, sindaci ( <i>Mayor</i> )	0.3	Parlamentoeuropeo ( <i>European parliament</i> )	0.1	Lavoro ( <i>Work</i> )	0.9
Sicilia ( <i>Sicily</i> )	0.3	Orban	0.2	Comissione ( <i>EU Comission</i> )	0.1	PD ( <i>Democratic party</i> )	1.2
Francia ( <i>France</i> )	0.2	Macron	0.2	Cultura ( <i>Culture</i> )	0.3	Vot* (Voto, votare,voti, vota) ( <i>To vote</i> )	2.4
Bruxelles ( <i>Brussels</i> )	0.2	Di Maio	0.3	Presidente ( <i>President</i> )	0.3	Candidato, candidati, candidatura ( <i>Candidate</i> )	1.1

Table 16. Italian Twitter: items divided by functional categories

Word mentioned/Lemma	Italian Twitter dataset
populis*	37 (fp1000w: 0.1)
Populismo (noun) (Populism)	30% (11)
Populist* (adj/noun)	62% (23)
Nazionalpopulist*	8% (3)

Table 17. An overview of the lemma populism in all its occurrences across the Italian Twitter dataset

Even as the results indicate that the lemma populism is not frequent in the Twitter data it does not mean that populism as a concept and an element are not present. Populist discourse such as the use of personal pronoun: *noi* (us) and possessive adjective *nostr\** surface from the data hinting at a division between *us* and *them*.



#### 4.4.1. Collocational analysis -Twitter

The conduction of the collocational analysis showed that the word *populism* seemed to attract a semantic field that clusters around the concepts of nationalism/nationalists and sovereignties. The other top 25 collocates can be observed from the table below (Table 18).

<b>Top 25 collocates of the word <i>populism</i> in the Italian Twitter dataset:</b>
Europa ( <i>Europe</i> )
Sovranisti ( <i>Sovereigns</i> )
Dicono ( <i>They say</i> )
Con ( <i>With</i> )
Destra ( <i>Right</i> )
Vorrebbero ( <i>They would like/want</i> )
Nazionalista ( <i>Nationalist</i> )
Sovranismi ( <i>Sovereignties</i> )
Combattere ( <i>Fight</i> )
Rischio ( <i>Risk</i> )
Loro ( <i>Them</i> )
Dopo ( <i>After</i> )
Facciamorete (we create a network)
Brexit
Sperato ( <i>Hoped for</i> )
Solitudini ( <i>Solitude</i> )
Ragioniamo ( <i>We reason</i> )
Raggiuneranno ( <i>They will reach</i> )

Prova ( <i>Trial, try</i> )
Promossa (Promoted)
Pericolocissima ( <i>Extremely dangerous</i> )
Ospitato (Guest)
Nationalistico ( <i>Nationalist</i> )
Medialogico ( <i>Medialogic</i> )
Intenzionata (Intended)

Table 18. top 25 Collocates of the word *populism* in the Italian Twitter dataset.

One particularly noteworthy collocate emerging from the collocational analysis of the Italian Twitter data is the word *medialogico* (medialogic) and its relation to populism. It will be observed further in the next Chapter 4.4.2.

#### 4.4.2. Discourse prosody – Twitter

The discourse prosody part of the analysis reveals how the lemma *populism* emerges from the tweets of twitter-users. Among a major part of tweets where the concept of populism is discussed; it emerges as a widely negative term.

*Salvini and Lega:* As can be observed from Table 11 in Chapter 4.4, the frequencies both for the populist actor Salvini and Lega are high (Salvini: 1.5 and Lega: 1.2), in addition the analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that they are tied together very closely – therefore the results of both actors will be presented in this same section. The discourse prosody analysis reveals that Salvini and Lega as political actors - individually and together – seem to be rather polarizing and are not referred to in a neutral tone. Either something is being tweeted directly about them or then about an official statement which

then is further carried on under a light of strongly subscribing to it or then on the contrary opposing it. Under these patterns fall the topics of immigration, immigration policy, domestic policy (fight against organized crime in Italy), EU-politics (the EU elections the possible co-operation of European populist actors).

Salvini and Lega do not however emerge only through policy issues or societal debates as the discourse prosody analysis reveals that Salvini as a political actor in digital media seems to draw judgment or approval regardless of what is the topic of the twitter conversation. Salvini's and his Lega-parties policy might be mentioned, but the actual criticism or approval does not always fall on the substance of any particular political concept, but on the persona and image of Salvini and Lega as political actors. Salvini for example is in an Italian Twitter context famous for tweeting about food, cats and dogs as well as immigrants behaving in an "undesired" manner. The polarizing nature of Salvini which can be noted based on the analysis of the discourse prosody manifests itself in the way that the critical voices towards him can be described as hateful just as the ones which underline the overall approval of Lega and Salvini in particular, seem to have the tendency of being almost idolizing.

The patterns that can be detected based on the results of the discourse prosody do not differ greatly from the ones presented before in this chapter: Salvini is a polarizing populist actor both on a domestic and European level. He is determined to fight for the *Italian people* and is therefore ready to take on political enemies both on a domestic and European level. His views and actions (as the minister of internal affairs) on immigration are considered rough and unforgiving – a sentiment which is shared by both the twitter users approving or disapproving of this. This means that what could be described as a coherent approach towards issues on immigration are not disagreed upon in terms of what they are, but they are then further evaluated based on personal or political opinion and values. The pattern that rises from the discourse prosody analysis is one that regards Salvini as the driving force and de facto leader of the European populists he intends to unite as a group in the European

parliament. Terms like *patriot*, *nationalist*, *savior* are attached to tweets about Salvini as much as those that relate him as a populist actor to: *poison*, *extremely dangerous*, *racist* and *Islamophobic*. The same pattern of approval/criticism clustering around Salvini continues towards the ending of the timeline during which the data was gathered (end of May 2019) as Salvini ensures his Lega-party's victory in the EU elections placing first in Italy with 34% of votes.

*Populism*: As has been noted before: populism as a lemma/word does not emerge that strongly from the twitter data set. The reasons for this will be discussed further in Chapter 5. However, the discourse prosody analysis shows that populism as a concept clusters around the polarizing terms such as *sovereigns*, *nationalism*, *fighting*, *extreme danger*, *risk* and *them* – in different forms (see Table 18, Chapter 4.4.1). The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that these words are linked to political issues or concepts on a general level, but not clearly linked to the populist actors which are observed in this research. The concept of populism is neither discussed or analyzed and thus it's "causes" are not emerging either. However, this does not mean that elements which the literature on populism refers to as *populist discourse* or *populist logic* (see Chapter 1) do not surface. Indeed, features of populist discourse such as the use of personal pronoun: *noi* (us) and possessive adjective *nostr\** surface from the data hinting at a division between *us* and *them*. This means that the populism as a political concept goes beyond and deeper than its most obvious patterns of detection (discussed further in Chapter 5).

*M5S*: The populist Five Star Movement emerges from the discourse prosody analysis mostly within a close connection to its leader Di Maio (see next paragraph).

*Di Maio*: The analysis shows that the populist leader emerges under two patterns: within the context of being the head of M5S and as a less important

political figure in relation to the leader of Lega: populist actor Salvini - both on a domestic level such as on an international one. When the EU-elections are mentioned he is referred to in terms of his party's policies on a domestic level rather than an advocate of EU-policies. Di Maio is being criticized for being a leader of a *shooting star*- political movement and that his party has continued – contrary to apparent promises made – to subscribe to policies made by establishment parties (the elites) which are not for the benefit of the people. Tweets of support for him and his party emerge, however without actual specification on what his or his party's policies in the EU will be. Even as Di Maio is often referred to with Salvini – tweets mentioning him do not contain the polarizing (support or opposing)-elements which his Lega counterpart does. He thus seems to be a less controversial figure than Salvini and after the EU-elections of May 2019 this trend seems to be stronger.

*Grillo*: Does not emerge as a frequent topic of tweets or conversation. The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals him to be a secondary political actor in relation to Di Maio. He is however mentioned as an actor and a “background player” and voucher for M5S policies as well as its leader Di Maio. His takes on immigration policy are referred to, but do not emerge as a topic of frequent discussion on twitter.

*Meloni and Fratelli Di Italia*: The Italian populist actor and the party she leads – The brothers of Italy – emerge as a more traditional populist force in the Italy and within the context of the European elections. She appears more frequently in the data than the other populist actor of interest Di Maio of the M5S. Meloni emerges as an actor whose policies align with the ones of Salvini and Lega on a contextual level (anti-EU, anti-immigration, nationalism), but not on a level of political profile. This is manifested in the way that she is not associated with Salvini as a political ally or a (female) version of him and his Lega party. Meloni is referred to as a populist alongside Salvini and Lega, but clearly on a domestic level (even as the EU-elections are a topic).

he tweets clustering around Meloni and her party have a stronger concentration towards the concepts of family, homeland and traditional Christian values. This does not however mean that they are not associated with Twitter trends which surround the topics of immigration, anti-EU or national sovereignty. Trends that criticize Meloni tend to be ones that criticize her as a member of “other populists”. Her takes from the media which are quoted draw praise as well as opposing voices calling her “a fisher of the votes of crazy people”.

*Le Pen:* The French populist actor emerges from the discourse prosody within a context where she is either seen as a player on a European level working together with her Italian counterpart Salvini in order to shake up Europe and the EU with their nationalistic policies. In addition, she is mentioned in tweets as a domestic political counterforce for the president of the French republic; Macron. Le Pen is not a frequent actor in the Italian twitter dataset, but a point of interest for the purposes of this research.

*Wilders:* The discourse prosody shows the Dutch populist leader as an actor who emerges only within the context where other populist actors are mentioned such as, Salvini, Le Pen, Orban and the Brazilian populist leader president Bolsonaro.

*Orban:* The Hungarian populist leader emerges together with other populist actors and is used as a “reference point” in how to either run an European country with a what is referred to as a “strong grip” or then the exact opposite as he emerges as something undesirable and something that should not be sought for. The Hungarian populist actor appears in a context where Hungary’s firm take on immigration policies are both receiving praise and loud animadversion.

#### 4.5. *Legacy Media: The Netherlands*

In the analysis of word frequencies, the function words such as prepositions ecc. were excluded from the search in order to obtain a functioning lemmatized list. In this part of the analysis, a simple word frequency list was extracted - excluding function words - and it was capped to the first 400 most frequent words in the corpus. The table below (Table 19), gathers the most significant items divided by functional categories drawn from the data itself, each item is presented alongside its normalized frequency per 1000 words. Frequency per 1000 words given the size of the corpus (31 148) this will make the lexical items more comparable. The choice of the lexical items is based on its relevance to the purposes of this research and their frequency of occurrence throughout the dataset. Under the category of institutions are included those tools enabling political participation that are above political affiliation.





Countries/Regions		People		Institutions		Politics	
items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w
Europa <i>(Europe)</i>	8.7	Baudet	2.1	EU	1.9	Partij <i>(Party)</i>	5.2
Nederland <i>(The Netherlands)</i>	2.1	Rutte	1.5	Euro	1.3	Recht <i>(Right)</i>	5.2
Brussels	1	Mensen	1.4	Parlement <i>(Parliament)</i>	1.1	Politiek <i>(Politics)</i>	2.7
Land <i>(Country)</i>	1.5	Timmermans	1.3	President	0.9	Debat <i>(Debate)</i>	1.5
Italie <i>(Italy)</i>	1.6	Le Pen	0.8	Minister	0.7	Lega	1.2
Duistland <i>(Italy)</i>	0.5	Macron	0.9	Universiteit <i>(University)</i>	0.4	Premier <i>(Primeminister)</i>	1
Frankrijk <i>(France)</i>	0.8	Salvini	0.8			Links <i>(Left)</i>	1.6
India	0.6	Trump	0.7			Populism	2.6
Amerika <i>(America)</i>	0.5	Orban	0.4			Brexit	0.9
Cannes	0.4	Wilders	0.3			Campagne <i>(Campaign)</i>	0.8
		Generatie	0.3			Democratie <i>(Democracy)</i>	1.4
		Kyenge	0.4			Fvd <i>((Forum for Democracy)</i>	0.7
						Conservatieve <i>(Conservative)</i>	1
						Politici <i>(Politicians)</i>	1.2
						Cda <i>(Christian democrats)</i>	0.6
						Pvv <i>(Party for Freedom)</i>	0.6

						Cdu ( <i>Christian democratic appeal</i> )	0.6
						Coalitie ( <i>Coalition</i> )	0.6
						Groenlinks ( <i>Green left</i> )	0.5
						Sociaal, sociale ( <i>Social</i> )	0.7
						Klimaat ( <i>Climate</i> )	0.9
						Migratie ( <i>Immigration</i> )	0.9
						National	1.7
						Nexit	0.3
						Economie, economisch ( <i>Economics</i> )	1.4
						Liberal, liberale	0.6

Table 19. Dutch Legacy media: items divided by functional categories

Table 20 presents an overview of the lemma *populism* in all its occurrences across the Dutch legacy media dataset, divided according to the presence or absence of modifiers (none, right-, left- or national-). Raw frequencies of the lemma are given in the first line, then the following lines just report percentages as to make the data comparable across the dataset components.

Word mentioned/lemma	Total	De Telegraaf	NRC Handelsblad	De Volkskrant
*populis*	82	7	48	27
Populism*	37% (30)	0	44% (21) (2 rechtse-; European 1)	33% (9) (3 -rechtse)
Populistisch* (adj)	27% (22)	29% (2) (1 rechts-)	17% (8) (2 rechtse-)	44% (12) (1 links, 5 rechtse-)
Populist* (noun)	29% (24)	71% (5) (2 rechtse-)	29% (14) (3 rechtse-; European 1)	22% (6) (2 rechtse-)

Table 20. An overview of the lemma *populism* in all its occurrences across the Dutch legacy media dataset

#### 4.5.1. Collocational analysis: Legacy Media – The Netherlands

The conduction of the collocational analysis showed that the word *populism* attracted a semantic field that clusters around known populist actors such as Wilders, Bannon and Salvini as well as several negatively loaded terms in general. The rest of the top 25 collocates can be observed from the table below (Table 21).

<b>Top 25 collocates of the word <i>populism</i> in the legacy media dataset of The Netherlands</b>
Rechts ( <i>Right</i> )
Een ( <i>One</i> )
Partijen ( <i>Parties</i> )
Voor ( <i>For</i> )
Bannon
Wilders
Politici ( <i>Politicians</i> )
Nemen ( <i>To take</i> )
Willen ( <i>They want</i> )
Macron
Ander ( <i>Other</i> )
Vrezen ( <i>To fear</i> )
Instincten ( <i>Instincts</i> )
Regering ( <i>Government</i> )
Met ( <i>With</i> )
Fracties ( <i>Fractions</i> )

Bedreiging ( <i>Deception</i> )
Afstand ( <i>Distance</i> )
Klooster ( <i>Monastery</i> )
Economische ( <i>Economic</i> )
Xenofobie ( <i>Xenophobia</i> )
Italiaans ( <i>Italian</i> )
Plannen ( <i>To plan</i> )
Menselijke ( <i>Human – attributes</i> )
Salvini

Table 21. Top 25 Collocates of the word populism in legacy media dataset of The Netherlands.

#### 4.5.2. Discourse prosody Legacy Media: The Netherlands “A Monastery of Populism”

*Populism:* The analysis of the discourse prosody revealed that the concept of populism emerged through the three following patterns in the legacy media of The Netherlands: 1) Populism in the Netherlands on a domestic level; 2) Populism on an international level; and 3) Populism as a phenomenon.

As a starting point it is noteworthy to mention that the *lemma* populism appeared with the word *rechts* (right), which can be observed from the list of the top 25 collocates in the previous Chapter (Table 21). The analysis of the discourse prosody revealed that the concept of populism was associated more precisely with the term *right-wing populism* and it emerged under a negative light. On a domestic level populism had a clear connection to the two main populist parties of The Netherlands: the PVV (Party for Freedom), FvD (Forum for Democracy) and their prominent figures, the populist political actors Wilders and Baudet. Both populist actors are represented to be a strong political alternative for the establishment parties and the premier of the country: Rutte as well as his policies.

Regardless of the fact that some domestic policy issues do emerge from the analysis, both populist actors emerge through their political ideologies and agenda's which are criticized. The fashion in which the political agenda of the populist actors emerge is perceived under a similar light on both domestic and international levels: anti-immigration, anti-Islam, nationalistic, anti-EU. On a domestic political level Wilders emerges as a spokesperson for homogeneity and a fierce stance against Muslims and Islam. (See further below: *Wilders* and *Baudet*).

On an international level populism and populist actors emerge as topical issues which have both relevance on a European, but also further on a global level. Populism is said to have a strong foothold in Hungary, Poland and Italy where they are expected to do well in the upcoming EU-elections.

On an international level, actors emerging from the data are Salvini of Italy and Bannon (former chief political strategist of the US-president Trump who is widely regarded as a populist actor). Bannon is reported to be on a "populist tour" in Europe where he intends to train and counsel the European populists as they face the EU-elections. The so-called "Monastery of Populism" or the "Populist school" emerges from the analysis and refers to the plan of the populist actor Bannon to hire/acquire an old Italian monastery where he wants to set up a school of populism (the plans are reported to fail and the school of populism is not opened). This international aspect of the united populists is portrayed under a critical light: portrayed as xenophobic, it is underlined that the attempt of these intolerant populist actors to "unite internationally in order to oppose internationality" is contradictory and hypocritical.

Thus, populism emerges through the mentioned populist actors and are therefore defined to a large extend by their policies or stances on anti-internationalism, anti-EU, anti-immigration etc. rather than an actual political ideology. However, populism as an analytical concept does also emerge from the discourse prosody analysis. Explanations on the question why populism is on the rise and what draws people to vote to it are elaborated on. They are however not objective as they emerge as critical and one sided in their tone;

populism as a concept is reported to appeal to people with xenophobic tendencies, conservative religious views and nationalistic affiliations.

Somewhat more neutral explanations as to what is the appeal of populism, which rise from the analysis are those of economic uncertainty and a anxiety about the future *de toekomst*. The anxiety which fuels populism emerges through explanations that are briefly offered through the lens of economic historian Barry Eichengreen. Another academic in regard to populism emerging from the discourse prosody analysis, is Cas Mudde who criticizes domestic policy decisions executed by establishment parties and thus giving space for populist actors to play the field. Mudde elaborates that there is a difference between PRR (populist radical right) and extreme right-politicians, however the differences are not emerging from the data.

*Wilders*: The discourse prosody analysis reveals that the Dutch populist actor emerges inseparably from the party he leads the *PVV* (Party for Freedom). Wilders emerges as a strong political advocate for the rights of the Dutch people, against the ones he perceives to be the political elites who do not put the people of The Netherlands first. Wilders emerges to be critical of what he calls the islamization of Europe and the political elites both in The Netherlands and in the EU who are responsible for the decline of security and traditional values. Wilders emerges as a widely criticized political actor due to his *xenophobic right-wing populist* views. He emerges under a critical light and is being accused of using the political space of both domestic and EU-arenas in order to repeat his populist vision. Wilders emerges together with his national counterpart, populist actor Baudet and his Italian, French and Hungarian populist colleagues: Salvini, Le Pen and Orban. Wilders is mentioned to be a part of the populist group which will be formed under the leadership of Italy's Salvini.

*Baudet*: Similar to his Dutch colleague – populist actor Wilders – also Baudet emerges through the party he founded and which he represents: the *FvD* (Forum for Democracy). In relation to Wilders, Baudet emerges as a more

dynamic populist actor as he is more frequently mentioned in articles and seems to be referred to a more prominent player in domestic politics. Indeed, his political persona emerges within the context of populism and the EU, but he does not appear to be the so-called spokesperson of the Dutch populists on an international level unlike Wilders. Baudet is however reported to seek cooperation with both Salvini of Italy and Orban from Hungary as he faces the upcoming EU-parliamentary elections.

Baudet – regardless of the fact that his political views are similar to the ones of Wilders and regarded as nationalistic, xenophobic and anti-EU (Eurosceptic) – emerges as a “fresher face” within the pool of Dutch populists and he is partly regarded differently than his PVV counterpart Wilders. This manifests itself in a series of articles where Rutte - the premier of the country – “invites” Baudet to debate him about the policy issues facing them both in the EU-elections. Baudet views on the EU and his euro skepticism emerge as he openly wishes for the *Nexit* to take place (The exit of The Netherlands from the European union). The discourse prosody analysis shows that Baudet – like other populist actors – emerges under a critical light from the legacy media dataset of the Netherlands. In one article emerging from the dataset he is referred to as a populist radical right politician who occasionally flirts with the extreme right, by political scientist Mudde who is being interviewed.

*Salvini and Lega:* The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the Italian populist actor Salvini (with references to his party *Lega*) emerges as a prominent populist figure both on a domestic Italian and international European level. The Italian immigration policy under Salvini’s leadership is reported to rise both praise and hatred way beyond the borders of Italy where he serves as the minister of interior affairs. Salvini’s use of social media emerges as a controversial aspect – yet it is recognized to be effective and progressive in terms of communicating policies. Salvini’s views on handling the so-called immigration situation is reported to be one that European populists admire to the horror of more traditional and liberal political actors on an international scale. Salvini emerges as the primus motor behind the potential

new political group inside the European parliament as he is calling for all European populists to unite, thus the discourse prosody analysis exposes that Salvini is regarded as the embodiment of European populism as most prominent European populist actors are mentioned with him – including the former chief strategist of the US president Trump (widely regarded as a populist). Salvini is reported not to have gone along with Bannon’s populist EU-tour even as collaboration on a principled level is mentioned to have taken place.

*Le Pen:* The discourse prosody analysis reveals that the French populist leader is regarded as the counter force against the sitting French president Macron on a domestic level, but also as an important part of the united front of the “European populists”.

*Bannon:* As noted before in the earlier section *Populism* in the same subchapter: Bannon emerges as an internationally influential and powerful populist actor who intends to assist the so-called European populists in order for them to win both on a domestic level in their countries, but primarily to ensure that the upcoming EU-elections will be won by the anti-EU populists. Bannon emerges as an influential and capable – yet criticized figure who is rooting against European liberal values.

Bannon as a populist actor within the European context emerges as an important one in the narrow analysis of populism as a global phenomenon which emerges from the data. Bannon’s populism is bluntly described as “a different sort of populism” which is more frequent in The United States. This “different sort of populism” which is said to surface and do well in the United States is reported to rely strongly on religious practices which no longer exist in Europe. This is why Bannon’s take on populism emerges as religious populism. It is mentioned that for example the populist actors Salvini and Le Pen are skilled in communicating to the religious voter base in their respective countries, but it is not comparable to the populist phenomena which Bannon refers to take place in the US. It can be understood then that Bannon’s



populism is a sort of an export product from the US to Europe. It is noteworthy to mention that even as Bannon is closely associated with the European populist actors such as Salvini and Le Pen, it is reported that they did not take part in the collaboration proposed by him.

#### 4.6. Twitter: The Netherlands

In the analysis of word frequencies, the function words such as prepositions ecc. were excluded from the search in order to obtain a functioning lemmatized list. In this part of the analysis, a simple word frequency list was extracted - excluding function words - and it was capped to the first X most frequent words in the corpus of the Twitter dataset. The table below (Table 22), gathers the most significant items divided by functional categories drawn from the data itself, each item is presented alongside its normalized frequency per 1000 words. Frequency per 1000 words given the size of the corpus (40 333) this will make the lexical items more comparable. The choice of the lexical items is based on its relevance to the purposes of this research and their frequency of occurrence throughout the dataset. Under the category of institutions are included those tools enabling political participation that are above political affiliation.

Countries/Regions		People		Institutions		Politics	
Items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w	items	fp1000w
Europa (Europe)	19.4	Mensen (People)	1.9	Eu	4.1	Piraten, Pirat, Piratenpartij (The Pirate Party)	3.4
Nederland (The Netherlands)	2.5	Sophi Einveld	0.8	Parlement (Parliament)	1.7	Stemmen (To vote)	18
Rotterdam	0.9	Baudet	0.6			Verkiezing (Elections)	4.6
Amsterdam	0.6	Arnout Hoekstra	0.3			Europeseverkiezing	1.2

						( <i>Eu-elections</i> )	
Groningen	0.5	Student, studenten ( <i>Students</i> )	0.4			Euelections, europeanelections	1.1
Utrecht	0.4	Europarlamenter,	0.3			Groen, groenlink ( <i>Green</i> )	4
		Klaver	0.4			Partij, Partijen ( <i>Party</i> )	3.1
		Timmermans	0.8			Debat, debate, debatje ( <i>Debate</i> )	1.7
		Hazekamp	0.2			Kandidaat, kandidaten ( <i>Candidate</i> )	2.1
		Rutte	0.4			Cda ( <i>Christian democrats</i> )	4.1
						Campagne ( <i>Campaign</i> )	2
						Vvd ( <i>The People's Party</i> )	1.7
						Vote	2.7
						FvD ( <i>Forum for Democracy</i> )	1.1
						Animal	1.6
						Democratie, democrat, democratisch	1.2
						Kandidaat, kandidaaten ( <i>Candidate</i> )	2.2
						Klimaat (+compounds) ( <i>Climate</i> )	1.5
						PVV ( <i>Freedom Party</i> )	0.9
						Pvd ( <i>Workers party</i> )	0.8
						Volt ( <i>Trans European Party</i> )	2.9
						Social, sociaale	0.9
						Brexit	0.5
						Nexit	0.4
						Politiek ( <i>Politics</i> )	0.9
						International, internationale	0.4

					Migratie, immigration (+compo unds)	0.6
					Programma <i>(Program)</i>	0.6
					Rechts <i>(Right)</i>	0.6
					Links <i>(Left)</i>	0.4

Table 22. Dutch Twitter: items divided by functional categories

Lemma/word	Total
*populis*	6
Populism*	(1)
Populistisch* (adj)	(3)
Populist* (noun)	(2)

Table 23. an overview of the lemma populism in all its occurrences across the Twitter dataset of the Netherlands.

#### 4.6.1. Collocational analysis: The Netherlands Twitter data

The conduction of the collocational analysis revealed that the word *populism* attracted a semantic field that clusters around words that are noteworthy considering the literature on populism: words of special interests are thus right, left, waves, to distract, to fight and content. Another curious take is that both the collocational analysis of the legacy media and Twitter datasets from The Netherlands placed the term *rechts/right* on top. This shall be discussed further in Chapter 5.

<b>Top 25 collocates of the word <i>populism</i> in the Twitter dataset of The Netherlands</b>
--

Rechts ( <i>Right</i> )
-------------------------

Wuiven ( <i>To wave (hello)</i> )
Kritiek ( <i>Critic</i> )
Factuels ( <i>Factuals</i> )
Afleiden ( <i>To distract</i> )
Zweden ( <i>Sweden</i> )
Bestrijden ( <i>To fight</i> )
Links ( <i>Left</i> )
Inhoudelijk ( <i>Content</i> )
Politieke ( <i>Politics</i> )
Weg ( <i>Path</i> )
Elkaar ( <i>Each other</i> )
Stemt ( <i>Votes -someone</i> )
Waren ( <i>Were</i> )
Vanaf ( <i>Since</i> )
Misschien ( <i>Maybe</i> )
Laten ( <i>To let</i> )
FvD ( <i>Forum for Democracy</i> )
Daarom ( <i>Therefor</i> )
Wordt ( <i>Becomes</i> )
Partijen ( <i>Parties</i> )
Debat ( <i>Debate</i> )
Door ( <i>Through</i> )
Nu ( <i>Now</i> )
Gaan ( <i>To go</i> )

Table 24. Top 25 Collocates of the word populism in the Twitter dataset of The Netherlands.

#### 4.6.2. Discourse prosody: Twitter - The Netherlands

*Populism:* The discourse prosody part of the analysis reveals how the lemma *populism* emerges from the tweets of twitter-users from the dataset of The Netherlands. Among a major part of tweets were the concept of populism is discussed; it emerges as a widely negative term. The term itself is used, but no attempts to define or explain what populism actually is emerge through the analysis.

The political parties which rise from the analysis with the mentions of populism are the Dutch *PVV* (Party for Freedom) and *FvD* (Forum for Democracy). Both parties emerge under a rather negative light and under tweets which discuss how voters did not allow themselves to be deceived by the populists. Nationalists as concepts emerge together with populists and they are commented on with an attitude of hindsight: “People that were tempted by nationalists and populists are now seeing the consequences, and they are getting disappointed when they see they cannot deliver”.

On a general level, populist parties are criticized not only through their “intolerant” policies, but through their actions in political practices: *they fight each other*. In addition, support for populist actors emerges in trends which commented on the success of political actors not only in the Netherlands but also on an European level with special emphasis given to Italy. Populism is referred to as an essential content of debate as far as EU policies are concerned and therefore it is portrayed as a tool to demonstrate that “Brussels is not the boss”.

*Wilders and PVV:* The Dutch populist actor emerges tied closely together with his party *PVV* (Party for Freedom). His takes on anti-EU policies and anti-islam emerges as polarizing topics with both praise and criticism surrounding around it. *PVV* emerges as the party which will fulfill the prospect of *Nexit* (The exit of the Netherlands from the EU) and close its national borders to keep the country safe. *PVV* is also mentioned with the concept of the *cordon sanitaire* (the concept being shown under a critical light). The *cordon sanitaire* refers to the policy of refusing collaboration with right-wing populist parties (only officially implemented in Belgium though). Wilders and

his party are also criticized for their simplistic policies and tweets emerge where farmers and gardeners are regarded as a group who understand the value of a strong EU for them. The terms of Muslims and Islam emerge also among the support demonstrated to the populist actors: only by voting for the PVV and Wilders can the so-called Islamization be prevented and the sovereign nation states be made stronger. Closing for borders and securing a landslide victory emerge as tweets of support towards the populist actors PVV and Wilders.

*Baudet and FvD:* The populist actor and his party emerge as divisive agents. In regard to Baudet's Dutch populist colleague Wilders, the topics that arise from the analysis are more detailed. Both actors cluster around the semantic field of anti-EU and nationalism, but Baudet and the FvD are portrayed – in negative and positive – also within a context of concrete issues. Some tweets are highly critical about Baudet's policy stances on dual earners and abortion for example. The critical voices of Baudet are accused of being "leftwing internet trolls". Support on issues more detailed than the expected stances on nationalism, immigration and the EU, emerge from the data also in tweets where animal activists are rather strongly criticized: FvD alongside its leader are portrayed as the safe keepers of the farmers and people working in the agricultural sector who are being terrorized by the activists.

Baudet does emerge also as a counterforce against "Eurofederalists" *who should not be given another 5 years of playing time*. Under these trends Baudet emerges as a progressive force of good for the Dutch people as well as the opposite: someone who goes against international co-operation within the EU and is thus causing harm to The Netherlands. Baudet – like Wilders – emerges within tweets that portray him being beyond anti-immigration and rather anti-Islamic.

*Salvini and Lega:* Salvini and Lega emerge as the prominent populist force in Italy, but also as actors of interest on a European level. Speculation on how big the margins will be by which Salvini will win are discussed. Salvini's role

as a European populist leader beyond Italy emerges as tweets that discuss the electoral victory of Sweden for example, mention the Italian populist actor and Italy as “being the next one to win”. The critical tone clustering around Salvini concentrates mainly on criticizing his policies on a general level and do not portray him under a strong negative light unlike the Dutch populist actors.

*Le Pen:* The analysis of the discourse prosody reveals that the French populist actor is mentioned within tweets reporting about the possible EU election results regarding her and her populist party. On another trending level she is mentioned within the context of the “gathering of the European populists” in Milan hosted by the Italian populist actor Salvini. Le Pen also emerges as a mention when French politics are discussed and she emerges as a prominent alternative to the French president Macron: both through her policies on a domestic and international level.

*Islam:* The analysis of the discourse prosody showed that the religion emerged from the data among supporters of the populist actors Wilder/PVV and Baudet/FvD. Tweets where Muslims were portrayed as a part of the Islamization of Europe emerged, and pleas to close all the borders were made. The solution to strengthen national sovereignty and to fight against the Islamization was offered within the context of voting for Wilders and his party the PVV. Tweets where the phrase *Helden uit Europa/ Heroes from Europe* was used, emerged and these referred to international co-operation between nationalist forces inside the EU in order to ensure the wellbeing of sovereign nation states (Islam being the enemy).

#### *4.7. Populist actors on Twitter*

As has been explained in Chapter 3.1.1. research question two investigates the self-representation of populist actors representing and their policies on

Twitter. In this subchapter I will present the analysis of the discourse prosody based on the tweets by the selected populist actors by each country.

#### *4.7.1. Populist actors - Finland*

In Chapter 3.2, the gathered data of populist actors in Twitter is further elaborated on. The dataset of the tweets by Finnish populist actors consists of tweets by the following users:

##### Name/Username **Finland**

7. Jussi Halla-aho/ @Halla\_aho
8. Laura Huhtasaari/@LauraHuhtasaari
9. Jani Mäkelä/@JaniMakelaFi
10. Ville Tavio/@VilleTavio
11. Sebastian Tynkkynen/@SebastianTyne
12. Perussuomalaiset /@persut

The discourse prosody of the analysis reveals that the Finnish populist actors tweets rotate around four major themes: 1. Domestic policy, 2. European policy and the European elections, 3. Immigration policies and 4. Climate change. Both themes 3 and 4 (Immigration policy and climate change) are tweeted about on both a domestic and international level. These research findings will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Below in Table 25 the categorized Twitter behavior of populist actors are presented. The table demonstrates strong trends that emerge from the analysis, not absolute values. For example populist actor Huhtasaari is labeled as “NO” in the category of proposing policies, because the vast majority of her tweets were not about policy propositions in relation to the ones where she criticized or attacked policy.



Populist actor	Opposing policies	Proposing policies	Tweeting about themselves (Not political context)	Anti-establishment	Anti-minorities	Mentions of populism
Halla-aho	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Huhtasaari	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mäkelä	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Tavio	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tynkkynen	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Perussuomalaiset (Finns Party)	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	No

*Table 25. Results on Twitter behavior by Finnish populist actors*

All of the themes 1-4 which emerged from the discourse prosody analysis as well as Table 25, will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

#### *4.7.2. Populist actors - Italy*

The dataset of the tweets by Italian populist actors consists of tweets by the following users:

##### Name/Username **Italy**

7. Matteo Salvini/ @matteosalvinimi
8. Luigi Di Maio/ @luigidimaio
9. Beppe Grillo/ @beppe\_grillo
10. Alessandro Di Battista/ @ale\_dibattista
11. Lega official/ @LegaSalvini

12. M5S /@Mov5Stelle

The discourse prosody of the analysis revealed that the Italian populist actors' tweets cluster around four major themes: 1) Domestic policy; 2) European policy and the European elections; 3) Immigration policies; and 4) Non-political issues. Theme 3 (immigration policy) is tweeted about both on a domestic and international level. Populist actor Salvini and his twitter activity will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.7.4. These research findings will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

<b>Populist actor</b>	<b>Opposing policies</b>	<b>Proposing policies</b>	<b>Tweeting about themselves (Not political context)</b>	<b>Anti-establishment</b>	<b>Anti-minorities</b>	<b>Mentions of populism</b>
Salvini	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Di Maio	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Grillo	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Di Battista	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Lega	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	No
M5S (Five Star Movement)	Yes	Yes	-	No	No	No

*Table 26. Results on Twitter behaviour by Italian populist actors.*

#### *4.7.3. Populist actors - The Netherlands*

The dataset of the tweets by the Dutch populist actors consists of tweets by the following users:

Name/Username **The Netherlands**

6. Geert Wilders/ @geertwilderspvv
7. Marjolein Faber/ @pvvfaber
8. Marcel de Graaff/ @MJRLdeGraaff
9. Thierry Baudet/ @thierrybaudet
10. ForumVoorDemocratie/ @fvdemocratie

The discourse prosody of the analysis reveals that the Dutch populist actors tweets rotate around two major themes: 1) Immigration and Islamization on both a domestic and an international (EU) level; 2) The EU elections of 2019. Both of these themes are also inevitably connected to each other. Both the themes 1-2 which emerged from the discourse prosody analysis as well as Table 27, will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

<b>Populist actor</b>	<b>Opposing policies</b>	<b>Proposing policies</b>	<b>Tweeting about themselves (Not political context)</b>	<b>Anti-establishment</b>	<b>Anti-minorities</b>	<b>Mentions of populism</b>
Wilders	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baudet	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Faber	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
De Graaff	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
FvD (Forum for Democracy)	Yes	No	-	Yes		No
PVV (Freedom Party)	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	No

*Table 27. Results on Twitter behavior by Dutch populist actors.*

#### *4.7.4. Salvini on Twitter*

The prominence of the Italian populist actor Salvini - as he emerges cross-medially (both in the legacy media and the twitter datasets) and across the countries that this research considers - is noteworthy and therefore, it is relevant to look at how the populist actor himself develops his communication on social media (in the case of this research: twitter). For this purpose, a small corpus was created, consisting of tweets posted by Salvini in the timeframe of

this study and compared this small ad-hoc corpus (48 196 words) with the larger Italian twitter dataset discussed earlier on in this research.

The comparative perspective is obtained by using the keyword tool within the AntConc. Keywords in a corpus are obtained by running a statistic relevance test that compares either two corpora or two wordlists (in this case it was the latter) and they represent a tool for highlighting the “aboutness” (Baker and McEnergy 2015) of the focus corpus (in this case Salvini’s tweets). As such keywords can provide a good starting point for analysis as long as that analysis is then followed by a thorough exploration of the concordance lines of the most salient items.

The resulting keyword list has been cleaned up as to remove prepositions and conjunctions, so that the “aboutness” of the tweets could surface more clearly as Table 28 shows. Table 28 contains the top 15 items of the abovementioned keyword list ordered according to their statistical relevance (keyness) in the corpus and also reports the normalised and raw frequencies of such items. The results in Table 28 will be further discussed and elaborated on with greater detail in the following chapter: Discussion of the results.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Raw f</b>	<b>Fp1000w</b>	<b>Keyword</b>
<b>1</b>	838	17.4	Salvini
<b>2</b>	673	14	Non
<b>3</b>	308	6.4	Sono
<b>4</b>	289	6	Italia
<b>5</b>	237	4.9	Europa
<b>6</b>	236	4.9	Grazie
<b>7</b>	232	4.8	Italiani
<b>8</b>	224	4.7	Amici
<b>9</b>	220	4.6	Lega
<b>10</b>	219	4.5	Maggiovotolega

<b>11</b>	191	4	Ha
<b>12</b>	169	3.6	Io
<b>13</b>	151	3.1	Ho
<b>14</b>	146	3	Oggi
<b>15</b>	139	2.9	Portaaporta

*Table 28. The top 15 Keywords from the Salvini Corpus*

As the overall results presented in this chapter will be the reference point to the presentation and discussion for research question 3: “What differences or similarities rise from the datasets of each country: Finland, Italy and The Netherlands, in terms of the concept of populism and populist actors in the hybrid media system?” – the answer as well as the findings will be elaborated further in the next Chapter: 5. Discussion of the results.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The objective of this research is to describe and explain populist actors and populism as a concept and their representation on social and legacy media during the European parliament elections 2019 in Finland, Italy and The Netherlands. In this chapter I will discuss the obtained results (see Chapter 4) through the three posed research questions each in their separate subchapters after which I will briefly summarize the key findings.

#### *5.1. Research question 1*

The discussion of the results in relation to research question 1: “How are populism and populist actors represented in Legacy Media vs. Digital Media?” will be presented country by country starting of Finland, moving further to Italy and then The Netherlands.

#### *5.1.1 Research question 1 - Finland*

Populism as a concept emerged as a widely negative term both from the Finnish legacy and digital media. It emerges both as a concept connected to political discourse in terms of policy and/or politicians, but also it is mentioned as a debatable unclear concept. However, as the results presented in Chapter 4 revealed: neither in the Finnish legacy nor the digital media the concept is actually further debated, opened or elaborated in any deeper way.

In terms of the Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset*, it is relevant to mention that in May 2019 the populist party was the leader of the opposition

and the second largest party represented in the national parliament. Their policies are thus reported within the frameworks of their themes: nationalistic values, anti-immigration and anti-EU-rhetoric. These reports which rose from the analysis of the legacy media are in themselves not approving or disapproving as they are more reportative in their nature. The populist party *perussuomalaiset* is considered and reported as populist, but the critical or even negative tone towards them only arises when their actual policies are being discussed. It is important to note that this refers also to all the other populist actors which emerged from the analysis and were observed, such as *Salvini, Le Pen, Halla-aho, Wilders, Huhtasaari* ecc.

This refers to the fact that populists on the surface are regarded as a “neutral” political actor in their rightful existence which is not in itself negative or positive: their existence in the middle of the so called political battlefield is considered legit. This sense of neutrality can be partly explained by the fact that the media environment in Finland is widely considered as rather stable and well-balanced. Indeed, according to the most recent study conducted by the Reuters institute study for journalism (2021), the news media in Finland was considered one of the most unbiased and balanced in the Europe with the overall trust in the media system and news ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with 65%.

However, the negativity that surrounds the Finnish populist party and all the other populist actors which surfaced from the analysis (national and international) - both in the legacy and digital media - emerges when the policies of the populist parties and their politicians are being elaborated further on. For example, when certain inconsistencies within their policies and their politicians’ statements are being discussed, the incoherence is being brought under the light. Themes such as these are policies which underline *national interest* above anything else, *anti-immigration* and *anti-EU*. These so-called populist themes are criticized both in the Finnish legacy and digital media, as being anti-EU and anti-immigration are considered as retrograde themes. However, the core of the criticism lies within the context of the European parliament elections of May 2019 where the populist actors of all EU-member states are looking to unite internationally against the international political



union. Both in the newspaper articles as twitter tweets this international co-operation element by political actors who underline the importance of national unity, anti-immigration etc. was seen as a widely incoherent stance. This factor and the one discussed in the following paragraph of this chapter: the accused lack of presenting concrete alternatives – are being the basis of the criticism shown towards the populist actors.

When discussing one of the major themes emerging - the unification of the European populists under the Italian populist leader Salvini - the actual potential policy suggestions put forward by Salvini and his international populist supporters are being seen as unclear and equivocal in the least. The unification attempt of European populists is being portrayed as shallow due to the fact that “opposing the populists in order for them to work together inside the European parliament if victorious in the May 2019 elections.

Thus, the negativity under which the populist actors both in Finland and the EU are emerging seems to be based on criticism on unclear policy solutions rather than the policy takes and stances themselves. The populists are thus not portrayed under a negative light because they oppose some policy, but because they do not propose a concrete unified alternative. This means that the Finnish legacy media does not take a stance whether criticizing the EU or immigration policy itself is are positive or negative, but it calls for coherence and the presentations of alternative policy solutions.

Another major theme which arose surrounding populists and populism from both the Finnish legacy and digital media was the incoherent and stance on putting the *national* interest first. Finnish populists and their European counterparts emerged self-contradictory and not transparent especially towards the co-operation between the Russian federation and its leader president Putin. This contradiction was discussed and debated both in the Finnish legacy and digital media. As the element of referring to the people and putting the national interest first emerged from also other parts of the analysis it will be discussed in further detail in the summary of the key finding later on in this chapter.

It is noteworthy to mention that as populism itself emerged as a negative term it can be suggested that it is also due to the associations which the word

has. The analysis showed that both the Finnish legacy and digital media consider *far right* a negative term and even as populism in itself might be seen more neutral: it is associated to it this negative one.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, one of the most relevant findings was that among the top25 collocates the concept *äärioikeisto* (*far right*) emerged both from the Finnish Twitter data as well as the Finnish legacy media (see Chapter 4.1.2). The conduction of the collocational analysis showed that the word *populism* attracted a semantic field that clustered around the term “ääri-” (*far/extreme*): *äärioikeisto* (*far right*), *äärinationalismi* (*far right nationalism*) and *ääriajattelu* (*far right thinking/views*). It is then relevant to note that across the whole corpus of the Finnish legacy media dataset, the word “populism” appears 50% of the time as part of the compound: “oikeistopopulismi” (*right wing populism*). Another key finding in the collocation analysis was that the multiword expression that appeared the most – and which was the most relevant to this research – was the word combination “kansallismieliset puolueet” (*nationalistic parties*). The collocate in itself has no statistical relevance, as the other relevant findings of multiword expressions were not significant (not related to societal or political issues, but were merely grammatical multiword expressions of the Finnish language).

However, in regard to recent literature on PRR-policies (populist radical right) and far right parties it is relevant to mention that far right parties do not always have to be populist, yet they often are (Mudde 2019), Traverso (2019). The results suggest that as the concept of populism is so strongly connected to the concept of the *far right*, it is thus considered more negative because of this. This might explain why in the Finnish legacy media the success of populist parties and policies on a global level are often being referred to and it is widely connected to far-right values often in a context where similarities on current populist policies are compared to the fascist ones in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which ultimately led to the second world war. These elements of populism are referred to as *populist anxiety* in the Finnish legacy media and it is interestingly regarded as equal to the anxiety which the fear for the global warming causes amongst people.

In the minor cases in which populism emerged as purely neutral concept from the Finnish twitter data, it was in tweets which simply noted that populism has gained ground in other European countries (without emphasizing whether this is a positive or a negative thing) and in tweets (dated towards the end of May) which commented on the EU-parliament election results stating that even as populists gained ground, they had not won by a landslide victory. The negative tone of those tweets reporting these electoral results were directed towards the result forecasts which were proven to be partly wrong. Hence the negativity of the tone was not directed to the concept of populism itself.

In terms of individual populist actors emerging from the analysis of the data, one of the key findings is the relevance of the Italian populist actor Matteo Salvini. Salvini does not only emerge as a relevant populist actor on the Italian or European front, but also on the Finnish one. As has been presented in Chapter 4.1, Salvini emerges very high on the legacy media frequency list - almost four times higher than the most frequent Finnish populist actor Huhtasaari. This is not the case with the frequency list of the Finnish twitter data, which can partly be explained by the fact that all in all Finnish politicians were surfacing in balanced numbers and foreign politicians were not. However, Salvini's role – and the way he is being portrayed – is relevant and unquestionable. He emerges as the driving force of European populism: a relevant political player both in his country Italy and abroad. As the results indicated, the so called populist conference in Milan hosted by Salvini portray him as the de facto leader of European populists, to the level that on a national level such as Finland he emerges as more frequent and thus more relevant than national populist politicians. This sets Salvini apart from other populist actors studied in this research as they are merely seen and regarded as the face of populism in their countries.

Indeed, the leader of the Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset*: Jussi Halla-aho, emerges as a minor actor as far as European populism is concerned, the results which emerges from the analysis conducted both from the legacy and digital media indicate that the populist actor Halla-aho is certainly the face

of Finnish populism in Finland, but not at all the face of it outside of Finland. Halla-aho and his party emerge as equal to their European populist counterparts as they are regarded as *progressive* and *a step ahead* in terms of using social media in political campaigning and political communication purposes, but Halla-aho as a populist actor does not emerge as equally relevant. This finding is also supported by the fact that the Finnish populist actor (vice-chair of the populist party) Huhtasaari emerges as more relevant from the frequency lists. It can be said then that as Salvini emerges as the leader of both national and international populism, it is not the case with his Finnish populist counterparts: the Finnish populist leader emerges as the main populist actor regarding Finnish populism, but not European populism, as vice-chair Huhtasaari outnumbers party leader Halla-aho by frequency mentions and thus relevance.

This is a very relevant research finding as it shows that even when the literature on populism and several scholars in particular emphasize the *strong leader*-element in regards to populism the focus is far too often cantered on male leaders (Canovan 2002; Laclau 2005; Rosanvallon 2008; Müller 2016; Eatwell and Goodwin 2018; Herkman 2019). Relevantly Mudde points out that gender and populism are rather complex and multifaceted concepts together and it would be a mistake to disregard the importance of female leaders within populist movements (Mudde 2019, 147).

The results showed that Salvini as other populist actors are widely connected to their respective parties and often regarded as one unity. As has been discussed in Chapter 4, the Finnish populist party *perussuomalaiset* as well as the Italian Lega are inseparable from their leaders and this manifests itself in the way how the individual leader (or prominent leader as is the case of Huhtasaari) seem more important than the party itself. This finding is supported by the academic literature on populism which gives a major role to populist leaders in regard to their populist parties or movements, as has been discussed in Chapter 1.

In the light how populist politicians shape the notion of what populist policy is, it can be thus stated that based on the results populism and right-wing

populism are seen as negative concepts at their best and as actual threats to democracy. Populism as a phenomenon is being criticized for simplifying policies and potentially exaggeration certain dangerous and threats which the populist tend to emphasize such as the loss of national sovereignty over EU-rule and the so called dangers of immigration.

Populism both in the legacy and digital media was strongly associated with the term far right and the historical connection to far right-policies in Europe are emphasized as it seen to be supported by frenzy nationalists. Populism and fascism are mentioned together under this context as well as the wide risk that populism causes to the rule of law in democracies. Left wing populism is mentioned as an existing concept, but it is not analyzed or tackled with any further.

Words such as *haittapopulismi* (harm-populism) and *EU-populismi* (EU-populism) which emerged suggest once again that populism in itself is not directly negative nor positive, but the terms which it is associated with determine the value of it. This would certainly be in line with the views of the political philosopher Ernesto Laclau as he emphasized how populism is an *empty signifier*, which is ready to assume every kind of content to itself and to be used for several purposes accordingly.

The relation between the media and populism is also recognized and discussed under a critical light in tweets which emphasize how the populists attempt to influence the traditional media and how media and populism are attached to each other. This is relevant considering the views of Hatakka (2019), Herkman (2019) and Mudde (2019) as they state that the right-wing populist self-understanding takes shape, changes form and gets stronger largely on the platforms on the online forums of social media apart from the actions of the legacy media or even as a counterreaction to it. As has been stated in Chapter 3 of this research; Chadwick claims that the hybridity of the media system has brought elements of nonlinearity and chaos to political communication as power is plural, fragmented and dispersed (Chadwick 2013, 210). This factor of populist self-understanding will be looked further into in this chapter as research question 2 will be discussed.

One particular tweet rising of the Finnish twitter which underlined how: “The European Union cannot become the playfield of populists”, does embody the overall twitter conversations around the topic illustratively. The most concrete action against populism is offered in a chain of thought which underlines how guaranteeing employment to citizens will work as a *medicine against populism*. The only tweet which offers tweeters view on the root cause of populism (what creates it and what makes people support populism), explains it as the fear for the future; *tulevaisuudenpelko*.

As was discussed in Chapter 4; the distinct minority of twitter conversations which portrayed populism as a positive concept and support it are anti-EU-voices on an international level and anti-elite/anti-establishment voices on a national level. On a larger international level populism is seen as the only answer and solution to the problems of today (which are however not specified), and populists will be the only ones who can bring *a real change* in Europe. Controversially to this: being pro-EU is seen as the “wrong way to tackle populism” and in itself populist (controversial in terms of understanding whether populism should be regarded as a positive or a negative concept). In a similar fashion another anti-EU take is a topic where tweets deal with the EU-policies which tackle climate change and are criticized for being “climate populism”. On a more anti-establishment and national level populists are being rooted for as the actors who propose a *truly progressive social policy* (unlike establishment parties) and this is also seen as the foundation of their success.

These above-mentioned examples rising from the results of the analysis, illustrate how populism emerges as a negative term from the digital media which is seen as a consequence of problems in the society which can however and should be tackled with and battled against. Even as the supportive voices for populism which rise from the analysis are in a minority as far as the Finnish digital media data is being concerned, the concept of populism itself is one of a polarizing nature. It is as clear that the concept cannot be explained only through the fear of the future or be defeated with simply a more just labour policy as populism cannot be the “solution” to all the socio-economical problems within the European Union.

### 5.1.2. Research question 1 - Italy

Populism as a concept emerged as a widely negative term both from the Italian legacy and digital media. However as discussing the results presented previously in Chapter 4, it must be underlined that the media environment in Italy is a rather polarized one (Gattinara and Bouron 2020) especially when compared to the Finnish or Dutch ones (see Chapter 3).

In general, according to the most recent study conducted by the Reuters institute study for journalism (2021), the Italian news media was not considered even among the top 20 most balanced and unbiased media systems in Europe, with the overall trust in the media system and news ranked 26<sup>st</sup> with 40%. Thus, the differences of media houses and their potential political party affiliation come to play in this case which shall also be discussed below especially in terms of one of the Italian newspapers selected in the data; the *Il Giornale*.

As has been presented earlier (Chapter 4.3): the mentions of the word/lemma populism by the Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* were remarkably minimal in comparison to the other two newspapers selected as data for the Italian legacy media. This of course does not mean that articles covering populist politicians, populist policy and issues related to these concepts were not covered in the newspaper *Il Giornale* which is widely regarded as a right wing-conservative one. The issues which arose all over the Italian legacy media dataset were the same all over the newspapers, for example: the European Union elections, immigration policy and even the populists uniting together. The major difference and a key finding of the research is that the *Il Giornale* articles covering populist politicians, populist policy and other political issues related to these concepts were covered in terms which avoided the use of the word populist/populism. Instead the recognized populist actors such as Salvini, Di Maio, Le Pen ecc. were called *nazionalisti* (nationalists) and *sovranisti* (sovereigns).

It has to be noted and underlined that because of the “lack” of use of the word *populism* the associations and collocates which were observed during the

analysis (and which overall emerged as being negative around the concept of populism) are covering the other two selected newspaper of the Italian legacy media dataset. This does not take away credibility of the results of the analysis as it can be stated that the articles which covered the *sovranisti* and *nazionalisti* were ones of an approving light when it came to the policies and policy stances of the political actors which are considered populist.

Thus, the concept of populism emerged as a widely negative term both from the Italian legacy and digital media. This does not mean that the findings that rose from the analysis of the Italian twitter data by normal twitter users was lacking support for policies and for politicians themselves who can be identified as populist based on the literature of this research, it merely means that as far as the concepts of *populism* or *populists* are concerned: the words clustering around the term were negative. The Italian legacy media's top 25 collocates presented in Chapter 4.3.1 consisted of words such as: *volgo* (vulgar), *sviscera* (eviscerate), *tribalismo* (tribalism), *tronfio* (pompous), *velenoso* (poisonous) and *ultrareazionaria* (ultra-reactionary).

It is important to note again that even as these words clearly indicate the depth and variety of how populism is largely perceived as a negative term it does not mean that it is not a polarizing one at the same time. When observing the 25 collocates of the Italian twitter data set (Chapter 4.4.1), the collocational analysis showed that the word *populism* seemed to attract a semantic field that clusters around the concepts of nationalism/nationalists and sovereignties. As the sentiments of nationalism and sovereignties can be perceived as somewhat negative, the results indicate that *populism* as a concept emerged as far more negative from the Italian legacy media than it did at the same time from the digital media. This finding indicates that the possible resentment/support shown toward populism is present also on the digital online platforms, but the debates and battles are being conducted by using other words than populism. For example: the political actor Salvini, Di Maio or Le Pen and their respective political parties are either being supported or opposed, but they are not being directly referred to as populists. The same goes for the policies these actors represent, the battles on the online platforms are thus being held via online



rhetoric which clusters around other words such as: immigration policy, nationalism, or then tribalism and poisonous. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that populism is an umbrella term and as such one that radiates either approval or disapproval depending on the values and ideologies of the recipient and observer.

The way how populist actors were represented in both the Italian legacy and digital media was similar to the way the actual concept of *populism* emerged: rather polarized and strongly divisive. As the academic literature tells and the results presented in Chapter 4 show, it is not a surprise to find populism to be a multi-voltage concept with different tensions revolving around it.

The valuable insight of the results comes to play when one observes the details on how populism and populist actors emerge from the analysis. The populist actors such as Di Maio and Grillo (and their M5S/*Movimento 5 Stelle*-populist party) emerged as almost secondary populists and politicians in relation to their Italian counterpart Salvini and his Lega. Both the legacy media articles about them as the twitter conversations were either revealing a certain amount of support or opposition.

However, the depth of criticizing or even blaming in the legacy media - or in the case of twitter: the depth of strong and degrading language - did not reach the same level or amount of negativity nor positivity which Salvini as an actor would. Even as Di Maio is often referred to with collaboration with Salvini – nor tweets or newspaper articles mentioning him contain the polarizing (support or opposing)-elements which his Lega counterpart does. He thus seems to be a less controversial figure than Salvini and after the EU-elections of May 2019 this trend seems to be stronger.

Di Maio's so called lesser role can partially be explained when looking back at the literature on populism presented in Chapter 1 of this research. As the notion of populism as a thin ideology - with its limitations – is appropriate in explaining the fact that populists can come from both sides of the political spectrum: left and right or equally, from neither side as explained by De

Benoist (2017), it seems especially relevant when the results regarding Di Maio are concerned.

Categorizing Di Maio as a populist actor on the right-wing/left-wing scale is by no means a clear cut matter and indeed he is not abundantly clearly on neither side which makes him a less polarizing figure and thus it is possible that he does not emerge appealing for the legacy media outlets in terms of media logic which lives for news scoops, scandals and is night and day fighting for the attention of the public eye and concentration (Esser and Strömbäck 2014; Moffit and Tormey 2014). This suggestion can be supported by the points presented in Chapter 2 in terms of populist logic. Indeed, Hatakka (2018) notes that the populist logic fits well the commercial interests of media logic and it can be stated that populism and populists produce drama into politics – something that the media houses long for.

It possible that as the Italian legacy media outlets have a “louder” populist actor of whom to report about, the image of the less fierce populist actor Di Maio is regarded as equally less appealing and thus the circle created by media logic, populist logic within the two media systems (legacy and hybrid) produce a “more interesting” and a “less interesting” populist politician, the more interesting one being the more polarizing one – in this case Salvini.

The results thus indicate that Salvini as a politician and as a populist actor in Italy is seeing as in a league of his own – regardless of whether it is considered to be a positive or a negative thing.

Both in the case of the Italian legacy and digital media, the discourse prosody analysis revealed that Salvini and Lega as political actors – together and apart – emerged as polarizing actors and they were not referred to in a neutral tone. This goes also for the articles covering Salvini in the newspaper *Il Giornale* as the tone was reportative and supportive when it came to the articles on Salvini's, his party's policies or the personality of himself. The analysis of the discourse prosody within the Italian legacy and digital media revealed that Salvini - as a populist actor - is inseparable of the party he leads the; Lega. This goes in line with the leadership-centeredness of populism as has been established in Chapter 1: Müller (2016), Eatwell and Goodwin

(2018), Gürnhali (2018), Mudde (2019) and Herkman (2019) emphasize the leadership-centered nature of populism as well as the embodiment of a *charismatic* and strong leader. There is of course a controversial aspect to this as the populist leaders are known to portray themselves as the fighters for the people and that their parties and movements are those *of the people*.

Salvini as the leader of the Lega and the Interior minister emerges as a populist political actor which executes strong domestic policies in terms of immigration. He emerges as a non-compromising political figure who ultimately only cares about the rights of the citizens he refers to as the *Italian people*. As has been explained in Chapter 1, the concept of a united homogenous people or in other words: the concept of a *united us* is closely associated with the ideas of *social identity* (Turner 1987) and *cultural identity* (Hall 1999) which resonate strongly with the elements of populism and nationalism in regard to one of the key concepts hovering about populist theory: *the people*. As Canovan (2005) pointed out: *the people* can also be an imagined one, but it is nevertheless an actor – and politicians will act in the name of it as well as against it.

According to Laclau (2005) *people* as a concept is an *empty signifier*, which is ready to assume every kind of content to itself and to be used for several purposes accordingly. *The people* is an essential concept in political ideologies, but populism can also be connected to less political ideological trends if they contain the concept of *people's sovereignty* as one of their basic principles. It is thus relevant to note that when the populist actor Salvini is emerging as an observed actor (not communicating himself) he is portrayed as a politician who claims strongly to be working on behalf of his nation and them, he refers to as *the people*. However, whether this claim or image is being evaluated in terms of positive or negative is a different matter.

On a more international level where the image of populist actor Salvini emerges as one who's aim is to unite the European populists against the supranational policies of the European union, which - according to him - do not respect the rights of nation states. Salvini's policies emerge as an attempt to "change the EU from within and not oppose it from the outside". Salvini's

takes on the Italian immigration policy (which he is leading as the minister of internal affairs) are widely portrayed as divisive and questioned within the parameters of international law (as in dealing with asylum seekers). The issues on immigration rise – as other aspects of Salvini as well – on both a domestic Italian level as a wider European one. Salvini’s views on the issue are reported as follows; the problem of the *immigration crisis* in Italy is also the fault as it is the problem of the EU.

As Salvini’s stances on immigration are widely criticized by other more traditional political actors and commentators both in the legacy and digital media, it is noteworthy to mention that several articles emerged from the data were also the head of the Roman Catholic church – Pope Francis – flagrantly rated the populist actors views and values as *anti-Christian* and immoral adding that he hopes that the Lega alongside its leader will not be successful in the coming EU-elections. As the literature on populism presented in Chapter 1 tells: populists often rely on references of a *golden past, good old times, a heartland* and a *traditional simpler record* (Taggart 2000; Rosanvallon 2008; Herkman 2019), the emerging of such a conservative and central figure as the Pope of the Roman Catholic church against a politician is noteworthy for the obvious contradiction and tensions that it brings: *the real people* have to choose between the Pope and the populist politician.

In the image which emerges of Salvini as a populist actor both from the Italian legacy and digital media sets, there are wider contradictions too which have to be addressed. These contradictions go in line with Rosanvallon’s (2008) general views on the contradictory elements of populism as he saw that populists are anti-establishment and anti-system in their approach, yet the contradiction emerges as one understands that whilst the populists are against “the system” they simultaneously crave to be a relevant part of it – on a political level at the very least.

The populist actor Salvini emerges as an actor who claims he is acting out his own mission for the good of *the people* who indeed have chosen him - which goes in line with the logic of populism presented in Chapter 1.

Populist actor Salvini and his representation in the Italian legacy and digital media are of particular interest as his actions are emerging simultaneously as “anti-establishment”, “anti-elites”, for the people etc. but he is himself an unquestionable part of the political elite as he is in the government of his country, he is a leader of a large political party, and he is holding an important institutional political position as the minister of the interior affairs. Salvini thus merges as a contradictory figure, not in terms of what people seem think of him on digital platforms or what the media outlets write about him, but how he is represented: he emerges as fighting against the policies and political positions of the political elite’s for the good of the people, however, from a position where he himself simultaneously is an impermeable part of the political ruling class which he so theatrically seems to oppose.

Salvini seems then to play on both sides of the political battlefield he is himself creating: he justifies his strong actions by the notion that he is for the *Italian people*, and he legitimizes his position as an establishment politician as he is a holder of that position due to the democratic process of elections. The contradiction yet remains: Salvini emerges as a populist with a dual position. He is fulfilling the will of the people against the elites even as he is a fundamental institutional part of the elites and the ruling class. In this regard as well, Rosanvallon’s (2008) views are relevant to observe as he stated that the general exaggerative and hyperbolic nature of the conception of the *fulfillment of the will of the people* and *the right of the people to act as a judging force of society* even over the judiciary, are a problematic element of populism and populist actors in a democratic society. This particular feature of populism and populist rhetoric is compelling as it essentially calls for all the political decision-making power to be handed over to the people. According to Laclau (2005, 4), populism generally contains this contradictory requirement: ordinary people must have equal opportunities for political participation, but it is associated with the glorification of charismatic leadership, even authoritarianism. Gürnhali (2018, 57) too states that, it is typical of populism that the whole movement and its supporters identify under a strong leader.

Salvini is additionally widely associated with other European populist actors as well as domestic ones and his party's associations (and therefore his) with the Russian federation and its leader president Putin are reported upon under a critical light.

The pattern on twitter was as follows: something is being tweeted directly about Salvini or Lega or then about an official statement which then is further circulated under a light of strongly subscribing to it or then on the contrary strongly opposing it. Under these patterns fall the topics of immigration, immigration policy, domestic policy (fight against organized crime in Italy), EU-politics (the EU elections the possible co-operation of European populist actors).

Salvini and Lega do not however emerge only through policy issues or societal debates as the discourse prosody analysis revealed that Salvini as a political actor in digital media seems to draw judgment or approval regardless of what is the topic of the twitter conversation – political or not. Salvini's and his Lega-party policies on whatever political issue might be mentioned, however the actual criticism or approval does not automatically base itself on the substance of any particular political concept, but on the persona and image of Salvini and Lega as political actors. For example: Salvini in an Italian Twitter context is famous for tweeting about food, cats and dogs as well as immigrants behaving in an “undesired” manner. The polarizing nature of Salvini which can be noted based on the analysis of the discourse prosody manifests itself in the way that the critical voices towards him can be described as hateful just as the ones which underline the overall approval of Lega and Salvini in particular, seem to have the tendency of being almost idolizing.

The patterns that can be detected based on the results of the discourse prosody both from the Italian legacy and digital media portray Salvini as a polarizing populist actor both on a domestic and an European level. He is determined to fight for the *Italian people* and is therefore ready to take on political enemies both on a domestic and European level. He is portrayed as “a man with a mission” who will not stop and this manifests itself in the way his

supporters quote the tweets he himself produces (this will be discussed further on with Research question 2).

Salvini's stances and actions as the minister of internal affairs on immigration are considered rough and unforgiving – a sentiment which is shared by both the twitter users approving or disapproving of this as the newspaper articles covering this.

It could be said that what can be described as a coherent approach towards issues on immigration are not disagreed upon in terms of what they are, but they are then further evaluated based on personal or political opinion and values. The pattern that rose from the discourse prosody analysis was one that regards Salvini as the driving force and de facto leader of the European populists as he intends to unite as a “populist group” in the European parliament. Terms like *patriot*, *nationalist*, *savior* are attached to tweets about Salvini as much as those that relate him as a populist actor to: *poison*, *extremely dangerous*, *racist* and *Islamophobic*. The same pattern of approval/criticism clustering around Salvini continues towards the ending of the timeline during which the data was gathered (end of May 2019) as Salvini ensures his Lega-party's victory in the EU elections placing first in Italy with 34% of votes.

### 5.1.3. Research question 1 - The Netherlands

One of the key findings emerging from the analysis regarding The Netherlands was that both the collocational analysis of the legacy and digital media datasets placed the term *rechts/right* on top (see Chapters: 4.5.1 and 4.6.1). In addition, the analysis of the discourse prosody revealed that the concept of populism was associated frequently with the term *right-wing populism* and it emerged under a negative light. It is noteworthy to mention that the term *links/left* was emerging as well from the analysis of both media datasets, however it emerged as a minor concept in terms of frequency and thus as a result: less significant. This can be partly explained by the fact that even as populism as an academic and historical concept is not unequivocally left or right-wing, the recent rise of right-wing populist actors globally have

strengthened the image of populism as a concept mainly associated with right wing policies (Ignazi 2003; Mudde 2007 and 2019; Auers and Kasekamp 2013; Geurkin et al. 2019; Traverso 2019). This finding of populism being so strongly attached to the concept of right-wing policies strengthens the academic received wisdom which perceives certain topics being associated with either “right wing” populism and certain others with “left wing”.

As the results presented in Chapter 4 revealed: the large majority of political topics which were associated with populism were to do with issues such as anti-immigration, anti-Islam, nationalism and anti-EU. This was the case whether populism was tackled on a national policy or international policy level and furthermore, the main populist actor which emerged from both datasets – PVV-populist party leader Wilders – emerged as an overall spokesperson for national homogeneity and a fierce stance against internationalization and especially against Muslims and Islam.

All these emerging themes are widely regarded as right wing-policy issues in general (Rosanvallon 2008; Muller 2016; Herkman 2019; Mudde 2019) and in fact, taken right wing policies and populism into consideration together: Stavrakakis and Kasambekis (2014) propose a concept called *inclusive populism*. According to them, traditional right-wing populism which opposes immigration and views the people as a culturally united entity, can be described as *exclusive populism*. These explanations suggested are credible in order to explain the findings emerging from the Dutch dataset: populism hovering strongly around the concept of right-wing policies in terms of anti-immigration and anti-internationalization. This finding and result is strengthened when taken into consideration that Palonen and Saresma (2017, 24) as well as Müller (2016, 1) emphasize that left-wing populism – unlike its right-wing counterpart – is not focusing on anti-immigration as it rather concentrates in policies that question the actions of the economic elites.

On a domestic level populism had a clear connection to the two main populist parties of The Netherlands: the PVV (Party for Freedom) and FvD (Forum for Democracy) as well as to their prominent figures, the populist political actors Wilders and Baudet. Both populist actors emerged as concrete



political alternatives to the establishment parties and the premier of the country: Rutte as well as the policies he advocated for.

The discourse prosody analysis revealed that the Dutch populist actor Wilders emerged as an inseparable part from the party he leads the *PVV* (Party for Freedom). Wilders emerges as a strong political advocate for the rights of the Dutch people, against the ones he perceives to be the political elites who do not put the people of The Netherlands first. The findings deriving from the analysis which present Wilder's as a de facto personification of his party are strongly in line with the current academic literature which has been conducted on him and his political personality as a populist actor. In terms of European populist leaders, Wilder's is widely regarded as an extreme example of this and Müller (2016) states that the Dutch PVV is not merely metaphorically a one-man party as the leader literally controls everything and everyone which ultimately has led to the populist PVV to be a party organization which practically has 2 members calling the shots: Wilders and his so called chief intellectual Martin Bosma (Müller 2016, 36-37).

The results of the analysis conducted - which strongly indicate that the image of populist actor Wilders emerges as inseparable and symbiotic of his party PVV - are also supported and further elaborated in the research by De Lange and Art (2011); The PVV members of parliament are practically delegates of Wilders and are even profoundly coached every Saturday by him personally on how to conduct their legislative work and how to present themselves (De Lange and Art 2011, 1229-49).

Similar to his Dutch colleague – populist actor Wilders – also Baudet emerges through the party he founded and which he represents: the *FvD* (Forum for Democracy). In relation to Wilders however, Baudet emerges as the more dynamic populist actor of the two: as he is more frequently mentioned in articles and seems to be referred to as a more prominent player in domestic politics.

As Baudet's political image as a populist emerges within the context of populism and the EU, he does not appear to be the “face of the Dutch populists/populism” on an international level. Regardless of the fact that

Baudet's political views are very in line to the ones of Wilders and widely regarded as nationalistic, xenophobic and anti-EU (Eurosceptic), he emerges as a "fresher face" within the pool of Dutch populists and he is partly regarded differently than his PVV counterpart Wilders as has been explained in Chapters 4.5.2.

As far as the policies of both the PVV and FvD-populist parties are concerned, they are very much alike, which suggests that Baudet's image possibly derives from his younger age (exactly 20 years junior to Wilders) and to the fact that his populist party is a rather recent creation and player on the Dutch political arena (founded in 2016). Of course it is important to note that populist actor Baudet – as well as any other – should not be observed and assessed only in relation to other prominent populists – Dutch or other. However, in the case of this research the analysis has produced results where these two populist actors do emerge under a very similar light and almost with a kindred-element to one and other.

Baudet's political stances on the EU and his euro skepticism emerge as he openly voices his wishes for the *Nexit* to take place (The exit of The Netherlands from the EU). The discourse prosody analysis shows that Baudet – like other populist actors – emerges under a very critical light from the legacy media dataset of the Netherlands, not on a personal level, but on a political. In one article emerging from the dataset he is referred to as a populist radical right politician who from time to time flirts with the extreme right, by political scientist Mudde who is being interviewed.

As has previously been elaborated, also from twitter the populist actor Baudet emerged as a divisive actor in the political arena. In regard to Wilders, the political issues he is connected to are more detailed though. And a relevant finding emerging from the analysis was that as both populist actors – Wilders and Baudet - cluster around the semantic field of anti-EU and nationalism, Baudet and the FvD however are portrayed also within the context of more traditional political issues such as farmers and people working in agriculture in general, alongside with political debates on abortion. As it could be expected; the voices of support for Baudet cluster around topics such as nationalism,

immigration, anti-Islam and the EU, but also in twitter conversations where animal activists are being portrayed as terrorists and Baudet and his populist party FvD as the counterforce for this “domestic terror”. One relevant finding which has already been mentioned in the previous chapter is that Baudet emerges from the Dutch digital media more strongly as a politician fighting fiercely for the *Nederlandsde volk/Dutch people* against Islam and the global threat of it. The emphasis in the image which emerges of Baudet as a populist actor is one that is clearly and avowedly more concerned about the Muslim faith than immigration itself. Thus, populism emerges through the mentioned populist actors and is therefore defined to a large extent by their policies or stances on anti-internationalism, anti-EU, anti-immigration ecc. rather than an actual political ideology.

On an international stage populism and populist actors emerge as topical political concepts and actors which have both relevance on an European, but also further on a global level. Populism reported to hold a strong stance in Hungary, Poland and Italy where they are all professed to do well in the upcoming EU-elections.

Populist actors who emerge from the data on an international level are Salvini of Italy and Steve Bannon (former chief political strategist of the US-president Trump who is widely regarded as a populist actor). Bannon is reported to be taking part on a “populist tour” in Europe as his intension is to train and counsel the European populists in order for them to face the EU-elections. The so called “Monastery of Populism” or the “Populist school” emerges from the analysis and refers to the plan of the populist actor Bannon to hire/acquire an old Italian monastery where he wants to set up a school of populism (the plans are reported to fail, and the school of populism is not opened). This international aspect of the united populists both in the legacy and digital media emerges under a critical light: portrayed as right wing and xenophobic, it is underlined that the attempt of these intolerant populist actors to “unite internationally in order to oppose internationality” is not only hypocritical, but also contradictory.

Populism as an analytical concept does emerge from the discourse prosody analysis from the legacy media. Explanations on the inquiries why populism is on the rise domestically and internationally - and what draws people to vote for populist actors - are elaborated on. The answers emerging are not objective however as they appear as critical and one sided in their tone; populism as a concept is reported to appeal to people with xenophobic tendencies, conservative religious views and nationalistic affiliations. As has been elaborated in this research: populism and the appeal of populism is in the very least a far more complex matter than that. Somewhat more neutral explanations as to what is the plausible appeal of populism, which rise from the analysis made, are those of economic uncertainty and a anxiety about *de toekomst/* the future. These findings are however not that relevant in terms of this research since – as has been explained in the previous chapter – these explanations rose from the legacy media from articles where political scientists were interviewed, which indicates that the journalists themselves were not offering answers to these questions.

## 5.2. *Research question 2*

As has been explained in Chapter 3.1.1 research question 2 investigates the self-representation of populist actors and their policies on Twitter (digital media). In this subchapter I will present the discussion of the results, presented earlier in Chapter 4.

### 5.2.1. *Populist actors - Finland*

The discourse prosody of the analysis revealed that the Finnish populist actors' tweets rotate around four major themes: 1) Domestic policy; 2) European policy and the European elections; 3) Immigration policies; and 4) Climate change. Both themes 3 and 4 (Immigration policy and climate change) are tweeted about on both a domestic and international level.

1. Domestic policies: During May 2019 when the campaigning for the EU-parliament elections were occurring, the Finnish national elections had just

been held 4 weeks before. A new government was about to be formed by leftist political actors leaving the populist *perussuomalaiset* party as the leader of the opposition. However, the way that the populist actors present themselves on Twitter in this context as the alternative political choice and the voice true of the “average Finn”, do not differ from the way they present themselves on a European level.

2. European policy and the European elections. The analysis of the discourse prosody revealed that the Finnish populist party is strongly united under the leadership of the chair Halla-aho and are aiming at a victory in the EU elections of 2019. The rationale behind the policies of the Finnish populist party lie in the fact that the EU is a supranational and undemocratic union, which is tightening its grip towards more federalism and evolving into a United States of Europe where national sovereignty is not respected and for example Finnish national symbols and values not allowed. The *perussuomalainen* party is on standby to collaborate strongly with other European populists to call out the double standards and failed economic and especially immigration policies of the EU.

Even as the populist actors are tweeting under what seems to be an united front behind the party leader Halla-aho, he is not the most loud voice on Twitter in respect to the party's vice chair Huhtasaari. As the Finnish populist actors firmly oppose the EU as a fully negative concept, differences between the stances of the party leader and vice leader emerge. In terms of Fixit (The Finnish exit of the European union) Halla-aho subscribes to it as a future project, but not as a realistic prospect in the coming years. Instead the vice chair of the party – and candidate to the European parliament – Huhtasaari loudly underlines the need of Finland to withdraw from the European union and the euro (monetary union). Accusations about the corrupt EU-elites such as the commission, European bankers (an ambiguous term) and globalists are being made. One major theme under the European policy which emerges from the analysis of the discourse prosody is the relationship between the Russian federation and its leader president Putin in relation to other European populist

leaders such as Italy's Salvini and Le Pen of France (Russia is accused of meddling with elections in the US as well as financing anti-democratic elements in Europe).

The Finnish populist actors defend their position in aligning with other European populists and a theme clusters around the rhetoric of pointing out that *several countries* attempt to influence free elections in Europe. The actions of the Finnish populist actors on Twitter emerge rather as opposing current policies, instead of proposing alternative ones. So called honest Finnish values and common sense for the good of the average (typical) Finnish citizen are being underlined and populist actors such as Orban of Hungary and Salvini of Italy are being widely referred to as politicians who are desirable as they set an example of a “strong” modern politician who put their citizens and national interest first. The European union is often referred to as *Eurostoliitto* (coming from the Finnish word *Neuvostoliitto* which means the Soviet Union) by populist actor Huhtasaari as she underlines the totalitarian tendencies of the EU.

3. Immigration policies emerge under both categories of domestic and international policies, however the thematical elements that come to light through the discourse prosody analysis show that the Twitter rhetoric does not differ. Current immigration policies are portrayed as a total failure both in Finland and the EU – which of the so-called immigration crisis of 2015 is the proof of. References to the failures of the EU during 2015 are widely made. Immigration in itself is seen as a unnecessary and harmful policy agenda set in motion by the irresponsible axis of the green-left *vihervasemmisto*. The populist actors on twitter present themselves as the only credible alternative to the widely used term *hyvesignalointi*/virtue signaling which refers to the elitist and sanctimonious attempt of the elites to make Finland and the EU “unnaturally” multicultural. The populists do not oppose international co-operation, but emphasize how “Finland should stay Finnish”.

4. Climate change emerges as a theme in the discourse prosody analysis merely due to the frequency of the topic. The Finnish populists regard it rather univocally as *ilmastohysteria*/climatehysteria and they underline how they will protect the traditional Finnish industries and workers from the perceived draconian rules and regulations of the EU regarding emission reductions and future plans of not using fossil fuels. As was the case within EU policy here too the populist actor and party leader Halla-aho presents a view where he is not against actions for climate change per se, but he underlines the fact that a country of the size of Finland should not do more than appropriate in regard to bigger countries.

In Chapter 4.7.1. Table 23, presented the categorized Twitter behaviour of populist actors. The table demonstrates strong trends that emerge from the analysis, not absolute values. For example populist actor Huhtasaari is labeled as “No” in the category of proposing policies, because the vast majority of her tweets were not about policy propositions in relation to the ones where she criticized or attacked policy.

There are certainly observations to be made on the content of table 20, however for the purposes of this research attention will be drawn to the most relevant troves. As populist actors Halla-aho and Huhtasaari emerged as the prominent figures of the Finnish populists from the legacy and digital media-analysis and they both are the chair and vice chair of the *perussuomalaiset*-party it is noteworthy to take a closer look at them. It has been established previously that populist actor Huhtasaari emerged as the more prominent politician of them two from the legacy media data and not the digital one, which is interesting as Halla-aho is considered the de facto face of Finnish populism as he is the chair of the party. When comparing these two populist actors together it is relevant to note that Halla-aho merges as an actor who does not tweet about himself, criticizes policy and proposes alternatives whilst not being anti-minorities or anti-establishment.

It is relevant to note that this does not mean that populist actor Halla-aho does not advocate policies which are anti-establishment and anti-minorities, it just shows that the content of his tweets is not that ambiguously or numerically about these issues. Indeed, he is the chair of a party which does emerge as tweeting against minorities and the establishment, and this can be seen as contradictory. A conclusion can be drawn then that even as a populist actor – in this case the leader of a populist party – is the face and embodiment of his populist party (as has been established in Chapter 1 this more than often is the case), individual differences between the populist actors populist communication and the communication of his political party can be unidentical. Indeed, Halla-aho does emerge as a particular populist leader as he is by all understanding to be defined as a populist, yet he does not strongly engage in all the classic debates which define populism. Between chairman of the party – populist actor Halla-aho – and vice-chair – Huhtasaari -, it is the latter who in her twitter behavior is in more line with their mutual party.

When looking at Huhtasaari and her tweeting in regard to the fact that she merges as practically equally frequent to Halla-aho from the digital media analysis, but not the legacy media one, one can draw the conclusion that her image is more provocative and polarizing than the one of Halla-aho. As can be observed, Huhtasaari does conduct tweets about herself and she is known for her sharp comments against policies made, anti-establishment and minorities. However, she does not emerge as a populist actor with an alternative policy to propose as the vast majority of her tweets were once of an attacking nature. It has to be noted that the proposed policies on in general do not refer to grand or wide scale political alternatives or references to them, but rather the fact whether or not an alternative is presented (“This has to stop” on policy X, is not to be considered a proposal of alternative policies).

Populism as a concept was not mentioned or commented on at all. This is interesting in a Finnish political context regarding populism as the founder of the populist party *perussuomalaiset*; Timo Soini – mentioned previously in Chapter 4.1.2, was known to refer to himself proudly as a populist. In this way he was able to define himself what the term meant and fill it with meaning and



signifiers convenient to his populist image building, but also to the way he wished populism would be regarded as.

### 5.2.2. *Populist actors – Italy*

The discourse prosody of the analysis revealed that the Italian populist actors tweets cluster around four major themes: 1) Domestic policy; 2) European policy and the European elections; 3) Immigration policies; and 4) Non-political issues.

1. *Domestic policy* emerged as one major theme among the Italian populist actors on twitter in the discourse prosody analysis. Themes such as immigration (item 3 below), taxation, social and labour policies were tackled under this category. Populist actor Salvini emerged as a politician mentioning these issues (mainly taxation), however without elaborating on the how's and why's to a deeper extend. His tweeting revolved around himself as a *man for the Italians* on a level which underlined his persona and public image more than the policies he advocates for. Actors such as Di Maio, and Di Battista – both of M5S – emerge more as “policy-driven” tweeters – especially Di Maio who underlines his institutional role as minister of economic development, labour and social policies. In contrast to this Di Battista's twitter rhetoric emerges as more ideological than Di Maio's and he underlines societal issues on labour markets and social policy with a tendency of appearing as a political actor who is “anti-establishment” for the good of the people and especially their social right. Di Battista's takes emerge as going against the financial elites and capitalism in general, however the contradiction arises within the fact that he is part of the government as he represents the M5S. Di Maio's rhetoric on twitter does not emerge as anti-establishment and his takes on policy issues on a domestic level are not underlined by their importance for the Italian society or the people per se, but rather in a self-justifying way (why is he in this government and what is his and his party's role in regard to Salvini).

2. *European policy and the European elections* emerged as a major topic from the discourse prosody analysis. One major topic within the upcoming EU-elections was immigration policy (discussed below) in a sense that it was closely associated with domestic policies. The populist actors Salvini and Di Maio emerged as the most active and relevant tweeters in terms of highly criticizing the European union and calling for a change to its policies. As populist actor Salvini – through his own tweets – emerged as a leader and unifier of European populists he also emphasized the call for change through his example as a man for his nation and a man for Italians (see below Chapter 5.2.4).

The underlying theme of Europe being in ruins without the help of the “populists saving” it emerged in the way how the claimed “failed immigration policies” of the Union and the corruption of the establishment politicians leading it, were portrayed. Even as both Lega and M5S with their representative leaders Salvini and Di Maio both criticized the EU and called systematically for a “change from the inside” – and portrayed themselves as the political actors who would deliver it – their approach emerged differently from an angle of political substance.

Whereas Salvini’s Lega and Salvini himself concentrated in his own persona on the tweets and how his political personality (even his personality alone) would ensure that “a populist alternative” is possible, Di Maio and his M5S emerged differently calling for a more technocratic and less “political” approach to tackle the issues. As Salvini’s and Lega’s takes on the EU were coherently ones of a critical and boastful nature, they did not present the populist actor Salvini under a light where he or his party actually proposed concrete alternatives except on immigration policy (to close the borders). In this regard M5S’s and Di Maio’s approach towards the European union and the criticism they portrayed against it in their online communication emerged as more relevant in terms of this research. Di Maio and M5S propose to change the status quo of the European union and they emerge as classic populists in the anti-establishment way which has been widely discussed in this research. The Euroskepticism which emerges from their online rhetoric is not however

xenophobic, anti-immigration or anti-minorities in its nature. The image emerging from the populist actor Di Maio's and his M5S's online rhetoric is one of calling for a "new order in Europe" – one of the people and one where European citizens can participate in the decision making.

The element of underlining and even idealizing this citizen-empowering potential which through the internet would result in plausible solutions in politics is thus clearly present in the online rhetoric of the M5S-populist party. Bickerton and Invernizzi-Accetti called this the most evidently technocratic aspect of M5S's ideology (2018, 140). According to Franzosi et al. (2015) this approach to direct democracy and political renewal has directed M5S's stances on a political level regarding the EU, towards clearly a new form of Euroscepticism which can be seen rather strategic than ideological.

This finding of the online behaviour of populist actors Di Maio and M5S is interesting as it tends to show that: 1) even as populist parties coming from the same nation are often accused of fighting over identity politics between each other, M5S clearly has a more neutral and somewhat concrete approach to their populist policy (in this case criticizing the EU) as they propose technocratism and "citizen involvement"; and 2) it falls in line with previously conducted literature on the very nature of the Movimento 5 Stelle as it gives a taste of where it might be developing especially in terms of approaching policies on a domestic and European level.

To some extent, M5S's Eurosceptic discourse is a sort of "indirect" or perhaps "reluctant nativism", in which the criticism of the EU constitutes a "scaled" up replication of the electorally successful condemnation of the political system in Italy at an upper level. (Zappettini and Maccaferri 2021).

3. *Immigration policies* emerge as a major topic in the tweets of the populist actors, but mainly from the ones of Lega and Salvini. The topic emerges both on a domestic level and international. Other populist actors such as Di Maio and Di Battista alongside the populist party M5S emerge as populist actors tweeting about the European union's immigration policy,

however the image they create is not one of such a polarizing nature in regard to Lega and Salvini.

The M5S with the mentioned populist actors portray the immigration policies of the EU as failed and in need of a reform, but they do not engage in an online rhetoric which can be described as emotional or scaring. The image that rises of the online communication of the M5S populist actors is one that portrays the European Union's failures in terms of immigration policy as simply one aspect of a political system that is failing and needs a revision and thus a reform.

Contrary to this, populist actors Salvini and Lega emerge as actors who portray the status quo of the current migration system of the EU as well as the domestic one in Italy as catastrophic and a failure leading back to the immigration crisis of 2015 and before. Salvini who during this time period is the acting minister of interior affairs and he is thus tweeting in a dual role: as a populist political leader as well as a part of the political establishment as its serving member. As the ways Salvini as a populist actor himself develops his communication on social media is being elaborated further on in Chapter 5.2.4, it is sufficient to say that the image which emerges of the Lega and Salvini as populists revolving around this issue of immigration is coherent in its colourful and intense manner which they portray themselves as the only salvation and choice in order to restore peace, western values and integrity as well as security to the European citizens and the people of Europe. In this case where the supranational and international role of the European union is being called under strong criticism – it is relevant to point out that the populist rhetoric, appealing to *the people* – is not absent on a level where populist actors who generally utilize these phrases in order to underline the importance of national importance and a certain nationality (over another one), now use it in order to create another form of unity.

4. *Non-political-issues* relate to topics which the populist actors tweeted about to an extended that it was a notable twitter trend, but which had nothing to do with politics in themselves on a substance level. These sorts of themes

within the tweets of the populist actors were for example tweets about pets, food and issues regarding the populist actor on a personal level (+sharing videos of the same nature). As out of all the populist actors chosen for this data set mainly Salvini emerged as one to execute this kind of tweeting behaviour, he will be looked further to within greater detail in Chapter 5.2.4 at the end of this chapter. Non-political issues trending on twitter are not that relevant to the purposes of this research – even as they do bare mentioning when discussing the image of populist actors. Therefore the more detailed look at Salvini will concentrate more on how the populist actor himself develops his communication on social media (this case twitter).

In Chapter 4.7.2., Table 26 presented the categorized Twitter behaviour of populist actors. The table demonstrates strong trends that emerge from the analysis, not absolute values.

There are certainly observations to be made on the content of Table 26, however for the purposes of this research attention will be drawn to the most relevant findings (Salvini alone will be discussed in a following Chapter 5.2.4). The most relevant observations which can be drawn from the table are the ones concerning the populist parties Lega and M5S (The Five Star Movement) and their representative populist actors. It is clear that out of the two Lega emerges as the populist party which is strongly anti-establishment and against minorities.

The M5S as its representative populist actors do not conduct tweets in large quantities which can be regarded as against minorities or the establishment. Even as M5S can be regarded a populist party which has traditionally targeted the political and economic elites, it has not been considered a PRR (populist radical right)-party which thrives on policies focusing on anti-immigration (Maggio and Perrone 2019; Mudde 2019). However, by May 2019 M5S had been a part of the government with Lega in addition to “being around” for a relative amount of time, for it not to seem as the anti-establishment political force as it indeed had become part of the establishment (Zappettini and Maccaferri 2021).

The contradiction thus that emerges from the online behaviour of populist actors as they are against the establishment even as they are a part of it. This finding is particularly important in regard to one particular element on what Rosanvallon (2008) has commented on about the contradictions of populism. As has been explained in Chapter 1, he in underlined how populists are anti-establishment and anti-system in their approach; the contradiction emerges as we understand that whilst the populists are against “the system” they simultaneously crave to be a relevant part of it – on a political level at the very least. Contemporary populism is not interested to “fight the fight” on the battlefields of the accustomed norms and traditional political arenas. It strives to generate fear in people with the narrative of the *moral decay of today’s society* and it seeks to present itself as the savior of the people.

Taken these results into consideration it is interesting to observe that the term “anti-establishment” can mean various things in different political contexts. Even as the M5S does not appear strongly anti-establishment based on the results presented in this research it is still partly anti-EU. A recent study (Zappettini and Maccaferri 2021) analysed digital communication these two populist parties: Lega and Movimento 5 Stelle during their EU-parliament election campaigns - their time frame of the research was wider though: from January to May 2019 (this limitation shall be discussed further in Chapter 6). According to their results both of these populist parties were essentially important as Italy as a country made a shift from a strong pro-European nation towards one of the most Eurosceptic ones in the Union. In direct relevance to this research and in support of the findings which are been discussed, also Zappettini and Maccaferri (2021) underlined the differences between the online rhetoric of these two parties: Lega with a strong rightwing populist agenda and M5S with a rather technocratic populist vision of democracy. (Zappettini and Maccaferri 2021).

### 5.2.3. Populist actors – The Netherlands

The discourse prosody of the analysis revealed that the Dutch populist actors tweets rotate around two major themes: 1) Immigration and Islamization

on both a domestic and an international (EU) level; 2) The EU elections of 2019. Both of these themes are also inevitably connected to each other.

1. Immigration and largely Islamization as a part of it emerged as a topic from the tweets of the Dutch populist actors. The discourse prosody analysis showed that the themes surrounding issues which emerged less (such as pensions, work or taxes) were connected to the themes of immigration within a negative light. The populist actors presented societal challenges in terms of economic insecurity and security in general under a light which underlined the relevance of a *balanced* and *responsible* immigration policy.

According to the populist actors, the Dutch people are not safe in an environment where their countries borders are not more than a “mere legal formality” and that the politicians in charge are not only aware of what is happening but welcome it. Populist actors such as Wilders and Baudet present themselves as the coherent and consistent gatekeepers of traditional Dutch values and society. Wilders opposes the supranational role of the EU over the Dutch national sovereignty and – like his rival populist colleague Baudet – calls for a Nexit which would give the Dutch people “The key to their own front door again”.

Wilders welcomes collaboration with other European populists such as Le Pen, Salvini and Orban, calling them patriots like himself. He prides for being a realist in immigration policy and a politician who has always had a coherent approach against political Islam and what he calls is the Islamization of Europe and The Netherlands. Wilders criticizes the EU’s immigration regulation called the Dublin regulation and presents alternatives of countries simply taking control of their borders with their own national institutions guaranteeing security.

Actors De Graaff and Faber quote Wilders in their tweets, but do not produce similar rhetoric on the dangers of Islam. They too however take a clear stance against immigration and the fact how they perceive that only a strong nation state can take care of its citizens – not the EU. A theme surfacing from the data is a clear us vs. them-thematic: According to this trend the current –

alleged disastrous – status quo which disregards immigrant and Muslim-threats as serious, is a reality thanks to the ruling political elites supported by the media which scapegoats the populists who in reality are patriots and realists who do not subscribe to the utopia of globalization.

2. EU elections of 2019 are the other theme emerging from the tweets of the Dutch populist actors from the discourse prosody analysis. Whereas populist actors such as Wilders, Faber and their party PVV emerge as agents for their proposed policies, populist actor De Graaff rises from the results as a politician with specific EU-policy related topics (other than immigration alone). The most likely explanation for this is that De Graaff was the lead candidate of the Dutch Freedom Party in the European union elections of 2019. His takes in tweets which tackle EU-immigration policy are firmly in line with the ones of his party PVV and its leader Wilders. However, he does tweet about worker's rights in Europe and how a certain standard of living can be ensured if rationally behaving patriotic politicians internationally (in regard to their own countries) say *no to Brussels*.

In Chapter 4.7.3. Table 27 presented the categorized Twitter behaviour of populist actors. The table demonstrates strong trends that emerge from the analysis, not absolute values.

There are certainly observations to be made on the content of Table 27, however for the purposes of this research attention will be drawn to the most relevant troves which are the political actors Wilders and Baudet. As their online behavior has been discussed in the previous section, the most relevant finding in regard to their image as populist actors is that whereas Baudet tweets rather frequently also about himself outside of a political concept – Wilders does not. He is the so called “senior Dutch populist” out of the two of them and in many regards considered as a pioneer in Twitter usage among populists.

Wilders has known to avoid the traditional arenas of political discourse and frame the discourse himself through Twitter (Blanquart and Cook 2013; Müller 2016; Mudde 2019). For example, during the 2017 Dutch general election campaign, Wilders consistently avoided most of the political debates



organized by mainstream media houses and instead systematically utilized Twitter as his main outlet and means of communication. He has become - both online and offline - a mediagenic flag bearer for an international rise of new right-wing populist parties. (Muis et al. 2019). This is an important point to point out as far as populists and image building on online platforms are considered; Wilders is a prominent populist figure on a domestic and international level and has a successful track record in regards how to utilize the digital and legacy media to his favor. However unlike his Italian counterpart Salvini, he does not tweet about himself on a personal or everyday level outside of the political context.

#### 5.2.4. Salvini on Twitter

As was explained in a previous Chapter 4.7.4., the prominence of the Italian populist actor Salvini – as he emerged cross-medially (both in the legacy media and the twitter datasets) and across the countries that this research considered – it is noteworthy and therefore, is relevant to look at how the populist actor himself develops his communication on social media (in the case of this research: twitter). As the results were presented in the mentioned subchapter in Table 28 (reported below for the reader’s convenience), now in this section they will be discussed and opened in greater detail.

Rank	Raw f	Fp1000w	Keyword
1	838	17.4	Salvini
2	673	14	Non
3	308	6.4	Sono
4	289	6	Italia
5	237	4.9	Europa
6	236	4.9	Grazie
7	232	4.8	Italiani
8	224	4.7	Amici
9	220	4.6	Lega

<b>10</b>	219	4.5	Maggiovotolega
<b>11</b>	191	4	Ha
<b>12</b>	169	3.6	Io
<b>13</b>	151	3.1	Ho
<b>14</b>	146	3	Oggi
<b>15</b>	139	2.9	Portaaporta

Some elements of Table 28 are surely to be ascribed to the medium in which these micro-blogs appear (contextual elements such as “oggi”, “portaaporta”, “maggiovotolega”). Others are very common verbs in the Italian language that often serve the purpose of auxiliaries and can therefore be ignored in a more fine-grained concordance analysis. There are however some items that catch the eye of the analyst because they might tell us something about Salvini’s personal use of the language and the medium itself.

The most salient item on the keyword list and also a quite salient world in general in the Salvini dataset is the name of the politician himself. Salvini therefore appears to self-reference himself in his tweets. Given the prominence of this item, it is explored further by considering the concordance lines of the item “salvini”. Out of 838 occurrences of “Salvini”, 6.1% of them are without a hashtag, pointing to the fact that those mentions do not serve the purpose of making “Salvini” trending on the social media. Indeed, if on the one hand we can observe that the occurrences of “#salvini” preceded by a hashtag are mainly used as a reporting strategy (e.g. reporting about achievements, actions and alike), on the other hand, those without an hashtag seem to pursue different goals in terms of narrative and rhetoric. Within these hashtag-free occurrences it is possible to observe three main trends. The first and most common one sees Salvini self-referencing himself in order to self-portray as a victim: 82% of the concordance lines (49 out of 55) mentioning “Salvini” see the Italian MP as the target of death threats, accusations and self-blame.

Very interesting in these regards is the pattern *è colpa di Salvini* (it’s Salvini’s fault) in which the politician wants to hyperbolically show that the

Italian media system and other political forces use him as a scapegoat. Only 13% of the times the item “salvini” is used to validate his own views, typically by setting up an antagonist and reporting then his standpoint: e.g. *non lo dice Salvini, lo dice x* (this is not what Salvini says, but what x says) where *x* is some kind of authority. Finally, only 5% of the occurrences of “salvini” (3) report about his own achievements as a politician or as the minister of the interior.

A further thought-provoking item within Table 28 is surely the pronoun “io” (I). Indeed, it is striking how such a pronoun is so prominent both considering the communicative context of micro-blogging where space is limited, and timing is essential and the Italian language which allows for the dropping of personal pronouns performing subject functions.

By following the methodology described above, I once again performed a concordance analysis of the pronoun “io” considering this one of the main strategies in which Matteo Salvini creates a narrative of self thus defining his public persona. The concordance lines of the pronoun “io” reveal four main tendencies, one of these was labelled “housekeeping”, that is Salvini informing his followers of his whereabouts, it accounts for 18% of the concordance lines of “io” and is perhaps the least surprising one in terms of discourse prosody. On the other hand, one of these tendencies is particularly prominent: building an image of Salvini as an unrelentless coherent person that, despite the adversities, the accusations thrown at him and the obstacles maintains a clear direction for the good of the nation. 47% of the concordance lines of “io” are used to emphasise his resilience (e.g. *io non mollo* “I don’t quit”; *io continuo*, “I persist”; *io la parola l’ho mantenuta*, “I kept my word”), his strenuous opposition to what are perceived as injustices by him and presumably his voting base (e.g. *io mi ribello*, “I act as a rebel”; *io nego l’autorizzazione*, “I forbid”; *io non sto in un governo che...*, “I am not part of a government that...”; *io continuo a lottare*, “I keep fighting”; *io faccio il contrario*, “I do the opposite”) or his hands-on approach to politics

(e.g. *io sono per i fatti*, “I am for the facts”; *io lavoro*, “I work”; *io ho fatto il mio dovere*, “I did what I had to do”).

A second prominent tendency in this regards sees Salvini emphasising the use of the personal pronoun “io” to build affiliation among the common people. 18% of the concordance lines of “io” see the former Interior Minister trying to create a common ground with his electorate and he does that by portraying himself as a father (*per voi e per I miei figli, io do la vita*, “I give my life for you and my children”; *io voglio restituire il sogno ai nostril ragazzi*, “I want to give our youth their dreams back”) as a patriot (*io servo l’Italia*, “I serve Italy”; *io sto con chi indossa la divisa*, “I am with those wearing a uniform”, *io sono italiano*, “I am Italian”) and as man of principles (*io testimonio la mia fede*, “I show my faith”; *io sono il ministro delle regole*, “I am the minister of rules”); within this tendency Salvini also refers to an emotional bond with his electorate by sharing his life-achievements (e.g. *Io ho ri-smesso, non tocco sigaretta da...*, “I quit smoking again, I haven’t touch a cigarette since”...) or by acknowledging the affection of “his people” and thus creating a divide between those who “love” him and those who don’t (e.g. *io so che almeno voi mi volete un po’ di bene*, “I know that you, at least, love me a little”; *io mi tengo stretto l’affetto degli italiani*, “I keep the affection of Italians close”; *io non mi sento solo, perchè ho voi*, “I don’t feel alone, because I have you”).

The third trend observed in these concordance lines seems to be strictly connected to the Salvini’s tendency of victimizing his public persona: 15% of the concordance lines refer to his response to accusations by political opponents or the media and either suggest a validation of his own views by some authority or report about his personal response which often includes him portraying himself as a forgiving work-driven person (*io rispondo col lavoro e col sorriso*, “I respond [to this] by working and smiling”; *io faccio zen*, “I keep a zen attitude”; *io sorrido, lavoro e vado avanti*, “I smile, I work and I carry on”).

The results are consistent with previous and recent literature made on the online rhetoric conducted by Salvini and underline the nature of him being the

voice of Lega also on a practical level as he actually conducts the messages (see also: Albertazzi et al. 2018; Evolvi 2019; Giovinazzo 2020; Berti and Loner 2021; Carbone et al. 2021). For example Zappettini and Maccaferri (2021, 253) state that:

Lega's messages (primarily produced by its leader Matteo Salvini) are characterized by a "hyperled" style of communication and stronger nativist elements (for example the appeal to an ethno-centric and "sovereign" idea of Italy.

#### 5.2.5. Concluding remarks on populist actors on Twitter

As Chapter 2 mentioned, recent studies on populism and populist actors on social media report that these actors seem to employ social media tools in five ways (Engesser et al. 2017):

1. Through social media it is easy to form an image of national sovereignty
2. Through social media anyone – any actor, any user – can portray themselves as the spokesperson for the *real people* and/or *the forgotten people*
3. Through social media it is relatively easy to build online campaign against any form of an identified *elite*. It is not relevant whether the campaign is based on economic, juridical or political grounds as it will regardless of the substance find its way to online publics which will support the cause
4. Through social media it is possible to identify and attack a group of people or institutions which are considered bad or not part of *the people*
5. In regard to number 4, it is easy to build a sense of belonging inside a closed online community for example by emphasizing the elements of a shared past, the lost *happy place* and the *heartland*.

From what has been observed throughout the findings of this study with particular reference to populist actors, this categorization seems to provide a close to perfect match to the figures that have been the at the centre of the focus.

### 5.3. Research question 3

The objective of this research is to describe and explain populist actors and populism as a concept and their representation on social and legacy media during the European parliament elections 2019 in Finland, Italy and The Netherlands.

In order to achieve the objective, research question 3 was posed: “What differences or similarities rise from the datasets of each country: Finland, Italy and The Netherlands, in terms of the concept of populism and populist actors in the hybrid media system”.

The key differences and similarities across the countries that are the object of this research can be summarized in the following list:

1. Both the Italian populist actor Salvini (Lega) and his Dutch counterpart Wilders (PVV) emerge as inseparable of their respective parties confirming the prevailing view among populist scholars that populist leaders are one entity with their party. This finding is of course contradictory to the statement often made by populists themselves as they underline their parties and movements to be formed and driven by *the people*.

A noteworthy exception to this notion is the fact that the Finnish populist actor and party leader Halla-aho did not emerge as strongly as in terms of frequency he was second to party vice chair Huhtasaari on legacy media and almost equal on digital media. This finding calls into question the sentiment of populist parties being “a one man organization” as it emphasizes the importance of gender. Huhtasaari is a female prominent politician and even as female leaders might still be a minority on the stage of populist politicians she is hardly the only one. Other leading female populist actors of today are Alice Feidel (AfD, Alternative for Germany, Saksa), Giorgia Meloni (Brothers of

Italy), Pauline Hanson (ONP, ONP One Nation Party, Australia), Pia Kjaersgaard (DF, Danish People's Party), Frauke Petry (AfD) and of course Marine Le Pen (RN, National Rally, France).

It is also relevant to point out that Finland is the only country out of the countries that are the object of this research, which has only one prominent populist party. This makes this finding even more relevant as the political populist stage in Finland is not one that is a shared one – unlike Italy and The Netherlands.

2. In seemingly more balanced media systems, such as the ones of Finland and the Netherlands in comparison to Italy, no clear differences could be detected in the ways how various and between themselves different media houses would report on populism or populists. Both in Finland and The Netherlands the image of populism emerged as a widely negative term from the legacy media. In the case of Italy however, only the newspapers which were considered leftist or centrist covered populism all together within that term and furthermore in a somewhat equally critical viewpoint. The major difference and one of the key findings of the research is that the Italian *Il Giornale* articles covering populist politicians, populist policy and other political issues related to these concepts were covered in terms which avoided the use of the word populist/populism all together. Instead the recognized populist actors such as Salvini, Di Maio, Le Pen ecc. were called *nazionalisti* (nationalists) and *sovranisti* (sovereigns).
3. Across all the datasets, the Italian actor Salvini emerges as a prominent and relevant populist actor – also more frequent than some of the national actors of a specific country. Based on the analysis and results of this research Salvini is the face and de facto leader of national (in Italy) and international (European stage) populism.
4. In the legacy and digital media datasets of both Finland and the Netherlands, the word populism clustered strongly around the term far

right, far right nationalism and right. This was not the case with the datasets of the Italian legacy or digital media. In the Italian datasets, the collocational analysis of the Twitter data revealed that the concept of populism attracted a semantic field around the word nationalism (no mentions of right or far right). This might suggest that in more seemingly more balanced media systems the concept of populism is clearly associated with the far right.

5. The word Islam occurs both in the Finnish and the Dutch legacy media, however in the Dutch one more prominently. The word Islam is connected to the word immigration in the Finnish data sets and more frequently with alongside the word Muslims in the Dutch one. However, even as the Finnish populist leader Halla-aho is reported about mentioning Islam under a negative light, his policies are not formed around anti-Islamization in any comparable degree when compared to the Dutch populist actors Wilders and Baudet, who's anti-immigration policies practically are exclusively merged with it.

In this chapter I discussed the acquired results and drew some tentative and partial conclusions on the wider framework on populism and populist actors in the selected three countries. The three research questions outlined in Chapter 3 were addressed to a level of detail which seems appropriate to the data set and feed into the major literature on the topic.



## CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Populism certainly starts and ends from a communicative act and as much as one can debate over what populism is, a populist political actor can ultimately be defined only through their rhetoric and communication.

As one observes the ideological dimensions of populism, the focus is on elucidating its ontological and moral assumptions about society. Instead, in the rhetoric of populism, these basic assumptions are taken to a practical level in political communication and further linked to the phenomena of the surrounding world and society. Populist rhetoric then seeks to convince its listeners of society's pure people against the corrupt elite, in addition populist rhetoric pursues to define society from this point of view and thus taking ownership of "what society consists of". From a rhetorical point of view, populism is also associated with other "strong" ideologies, and thus influences how populism is meaningful in the minds of the public. If the people are appealed through xenophobic speech or patriotic anecdotes and narratives, then populism is also associated with such nationalism in people's minds.

When examining populism from the perspective of rhetoric, the most essential concept is *the people*, not unlike in the other schools of thought which study populism. Canovan (1984, 313) stated that the only feature that unites all populist actors is a rhetorical style that focuses on appealing to the people. However, it is good to bear in mind that despite her groundbreaking work on populism through the scope of *political style* – Canovan personally regarded populism as a movement. Stanley (2008, 102-107) sees that the concept of the people is characterized on the one hand by its rhetorical usefulness and on the other hand by its conceptual vagueness. The flexibility of the concept of the people helps populist rhetoric, as the

criteria for inclusion of people depend on the speaker. It is thus a question of defining who belongs to the people emphasized by the populist and who is excluded from it. With the concept of the people, populist leaders assert that they represent a group of different groups that, despite their differences, share a common idea: the elites have corrupted the people's right for self-determination (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012, 5).

In the course of this research I focused on describing and explaining populist actors and populism as a concept, and their representation on social and legacy media during the European parliament elections 2019 in three European countries: Finland, Italy and The Netherlands. This research however has to be regarded only as a first attempt to approach populist discourse and in a cross-cultural and cross-lingual context, within this specific framework.

These mixed methodologies approach which I used in this research were discourse analysis, corpus linguistics which eventually led me to embrace the framework of corpus assisted discourse studies. In terms of the rationale behind the mixed methodology of this research, it was essential to consider the role of the hybrid media system (Chadwick 2013) concerning the mass media in today's globalized world.

Mass media, as a matter of fact, facilitate and practically enable the circulation of information across languages, cultures and countries, but it would be naïve to think that they do so following "fair-play" rules so to say (Aragrande 2018, 73). Mass media "can privilege specific information and they can also prohibit and hinder information from being circulated" (Schäffner and Bassnett 2010, 8). This point was particularly relevant to this study as it caters a valid reason to go beyond the texts (the communication, discourse and rhetoric) and observe not only at what is in the corpus, but also at the context of the texts in it as well as it in addition gives a credible reason for using a mixed methodology.

The corpora that were built by using the data for this research were following M. Baker (1995, 1996) and McEnery et al.'s (2006) categorizations, specialized comparable corpora in that they truly focus on

a specific text genre (newspaper media and twitter tweets) in three different languages (Finnish, Italian and Dutch), embedded in three different socio-political contexts within the European Union in a short period of time. McEnery and Wilson (2011) claim that corpus-driven and corpus-based approaches do in no way exclude each other out, but instead are complementary (see also McEnery et al., 2006).

The dataset was gathered from legacy media (newspaper articles) and digital media (Twitter tweets) from three different countries: Finland, Italy and The Netherlands during the same exact time period: 1-31.5.2019 in the context of the European Union elections of that same year. Each country-based dataset of the legacy media consisted of 3 newspapers per country. The digital media data was gathered from Twitter based on a particular hashtag (#europeanelections2019) during the period of 1-31 of May 2019 from all the EU member states. In order to achieve the objective of this research, three research questions were posed.

1. How are populism and populist actors represented in Legacy Media vs. Digital Media?
2. How are the populist actors representing themselves and their policies on Twitter (digital media)?
3. What differences or similarities arise from the datasets of each country: Finland, Italy and The Netherlands, in terms of the concept of populism and populist actors in the hybrid media system?

Research question 1 investigated the representation of populism and populist actors in legacy media vs. the representation of populism and populist actors on digital media. Therefore, taking into consideration the nature of populism and the media it was relevant to explore how it was being represented within different media arenas. The results which emerged from the conducted analysis led us to a better understanding of relationships and balances of power between different actors in the public sphere and the dynamics of influence and connections between different media arenas as well as detecting patterns of legitimization or delegitimization of political actors.

Research question 2 examined the relation between populist actors (politicians) on Twitter in relation to populism as a concept. The focus of this research question is in how populist political actors themselves use Twitter in order to represent themselves and their policies. According to Palonen populism gets its content when it becomes entangled with other things (Palonen 2018, 4). Thus, it was be relevant to investigate how the populists' usage of social media to present themselves and their policies was influenced by the representation by other actors in legacy and digital Media. The logic of social media gives the populists more freedom (Engesser et al., 2017, 1123) & (Jacobs and Spierings, 2019).

Research question 3 was based on the results which emerged from the analysis founded on research questions 1 and 2. As research question 3 was be answered by observing the results of research questions 1 and 2 and it was further mirrored against the contextual elements which derive from the research literature; populism, populism and the media and discourse analysis, the latter emphasizing among many other things the context of each particular situation.

Indeed as has been discussed, the smallest level of the context is the *context of the situation* which refers to an immediate social situation of which language use is a part. Social and linguistic activities (what can be done, what kind of agency takes place, how language works) and the roles of actors (whether they are asked, discussed, challenged, etc.) are essential. (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, 31–33.)

The presented results demonstrate that certain populist actors such as Matteo Salvini and his Dutch counterpart Geert Wilders emerge as inseparable of their respective parties confirming the prevailing view among populist scholars that populist leaders are one entity with their party. This finding underlined the contradictory element of populisms, as a statement often made by populists themselves is that populist parties and movements are often formed and driven by *the people*.

As the results confirmed the prevailing perception amongst academics that populist movements are surrounded around strong *male* figures, some

noteworthy exceptions emerged as well, showing that gender does play a role in the study of populism - a notion which should not be neglected as also (Mudde 2019, 147) has pointed out. It also became evident based on the analysis, that in countries with seemingly more balanced media systems, no clear differences could be detected in the ways how various and between themselves different media houses would report on populism or populists.

Additionally, in countries with seemingly more balanced media systems as well as in their digital media online-conversations, the concept of populism clustered strongly around the term far right and far right nationalism. The acquired results also confirmed the hypotheses that immigration as a policy subject would emerge from both datasets within the frameworks of populism and populist discourse. It is essential to underline that the religion *Islam* emerged rather clearly as a sub-category under this topic from the datasets of all countries.

Finally, one of the key findings was that one populist actor can emerge internationally as the “more prominent and relevant” populist actor – also more frequent than some of the national actors of a specific country. Based on the analysis and results of this research in particular, the Italian populist actor Matteo Salvini surfaced as the face and de facto leader of national (in Italy) and international (European stage) populism. This research also provided a detailed and relevant look into how a populist actor such as Salvini himself develops his communication on social media (twitter).

“Not only *including* but *focusing* on the communicative aspects of populism will help us to better understand one of the hallmarks of contemporary politics” (Aalberg et al. 2017). The dissemination of populist communication and its widespread appeal can also not be fully understood unless it is investigated in a comparative context which is indeed what has been done in this research. While populism has been found to be a global phenomenon common to most democratic countries (Kaltwasser et al. 2017), the form, visibility, and success of populism varies considerably across cultures. Many contextual factors determine the amount of populist communication adopted by political actors, media actors, and citizens. Only

comparative analysis can reveal and explain similarities and differences in the communicative aspects of populism across countries. (De Vreese et al. 2018)

As has been noted, this research however has to be regarded only as a first attempt to approach populist discourse and in a cross-cultural and cross-lingual context, within this specific framework. Future research projects could utilize the results which have been derived from this particular research and to further enlarge the scope of the entire study. Future research projects in the field of populism, political communication and discourse analysis all within the framework of the hybrid media system in a cross-cultural and cross-lingual context, could benefit if the data was gathered on a larger scale (both from the legacy and digital media) and in addition, other European union countries such as Belgium, France, Germany and Austria could be added – not to mention the East European EU-countries.

It could also prove to be valuable to observe and further research the differences between EU-member countries where the data would be gathered from countries which used to be behind the Iron curtain and between those which were not. Including other elements to the data of the legacy media datasets such as tv-news might bring new and novel perspectives to the framework where populism as a concept and populist actors are being observed.

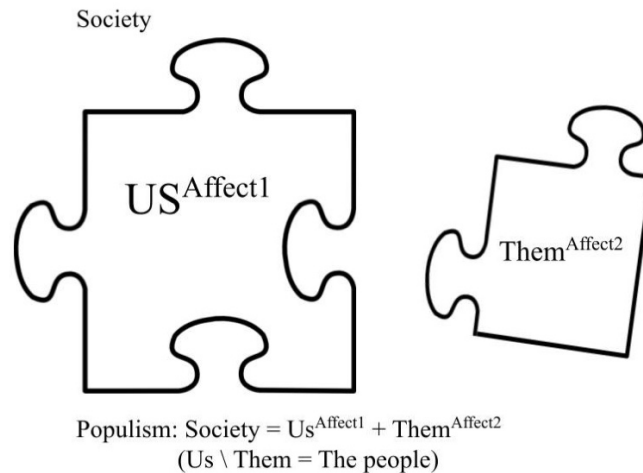
Finally, taking stock from Emilia Palonen's (2020) heuristic model and the rather bold argument that populism can be reduced into the following formula:

$$\text{Populism} = \text{Us}^{\text{Affect1}} + \text{Frontier}^{\text{Affect2}}$$

It may be worthwhile to further explore it, enhance and expand it into an all-embracing one in order for it to account for the complexities and ramifications of a phenomenon that still remains pervasive and difficult to interpret and grasp. Therefore, I have conducted the following heuristic model and formula of what populism is with the visualization of it (Picture 2 below). I argue that:

$$\text{Populism: Society} = \text{Us}^{\text{Affect1}} + \text{Them}^{\text{Affect2}}$$

$$(\text{Us} \setminus \text{Them} = \text{The people})$$



*Picture 2. A heuristic model and formula of populism and its visualization*

This formula does not claim to embody what populism is on an existential factual level. However, it transparently and concretely shows that however one defines populism - whether it is an ideology, a communicative or rhetoric performance, a tool or even a strategy – it ultimately frames the society in the following way: Society is formed by a entirety which is divided by an *Us* and a *Them*. The affects on *Us* and them can be filled with any meaning which supports the populist framing and narrative: *Us* where in the affect is (the citizens, us the Christians, us the liberals, us the conservatives) and *Them* (the foreigners, the media, the elites, the enemy). The distinction and value charge between *Us* and *Them* – the two pieces of the puzzle – is demonstrated in the lower row of the formula, where the words *Us* and *Them* are divided with the symbol “ \ “. It refers to the mathematical notation of  $A \setminus B$  relative complement, which states that A has something B does not. Hence, the distinction where *Us* is something without *Them* gives us the definition that *Us* is the people and *Them* are not, hence:  $\text{Us} \setminus \text{Them} = \text{The people}$ . Therefore also

the visualization of this model and formula of populism shows that *Us* is bigger, thus a more valuable piece of the puzzle.

Such a model and a formula can serve multiple purposes within research in the fields of political sciences, political analysis and discourse analysis. One can use it as a starting point to evaluate political communicative environment dealing with populism or as a measuring stick for populism and populist logic and how it is being framed. On a mere practical level, it's purpose could serve as a profitable memory rule for students and scholars of political sciences. After reading, studying and glancing through the tremendous amount of literature which exists on populism (and it still keeps on surfacing), they could write down this simple formula and mirror it against all the literature and written definitions of this ambiguous and slippery concept; populism which starts and ends from a communicative act and can be reduced to a heuristic model and formula as I have presented.



## References

- Aalberg, T., Esser, F., Reinemann, C., Stomback, J. and De Vreese, CH. (2017). *Populist Political Communication in Europe*. New York: Routledge.
- Akkerman, T. 2011. "Friend or foe? Right-wing populism and the popular press in Britain and the Netherlands". *Journalism*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884911415972>
- Albertazzi, D., McDonnel, D. 2008. *Twenty-First Century Populism The Spectre of Western European Democracy*. London: Palgrave MacMillan
- Altheide, D. L., and Snow, R. P. (1979). *Media Logic*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Amanpour, C. 2016. "Journalism Faces an 'Existential Crisis' in Trump Era." *CNN*, November 23. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/23/opinions/christiane-amanpour-journalism-in-trump-era/> [last viewed on 30/01/2022]
- Ankersmit, F. 1996. *Aesthetic Politics: Political Philosophy beyond Fact and Value*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ankersmit, F. 2002. *Political representation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Anselmi, M. 2017. *Populism: An Introduction*. Milton: Taylor and Francis.
- Anthony, L. 2022. AntConc (Version 4.0.3) [Computer Software]. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Available from <https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software>
- Aragrande, G. 2018. *Multilingual journalism, news translation and discourse: converging methods, converging theories*. University of Bologna: PhD Thesis.
- Aragrande, G. 2020. *Fascinating Transition in Multilingual Newscasts – a corpus-based investigation of translation in the news*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Aragrande, G. De Lazzari C. 2020. "From Italy with love: narratives of expats' political engagement in a corpus of Italian media outlets" in *Cultus* (13) 2020
- Arditi, B. (2010) "Populism is hegemony is politics?" In Laclau (ed.) *On Populist Reason. Constellations: An International Journal of Critical & Democratic Theory* 17:3, 488-497.

- Ashton, D., Feasey, R. 2013. “‘This is not how cancer looks’: Celebrity diagnosis and death in the tabloid media”. *Journalism* - <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913488726>
- Aslanidis, P. 2015 ‘Occupy Wall Street, European Indignados: Social Movements in Comparative Perspective – Is Populism the Common Denominator?’. Paper presented at the ‘Inside and Outside Southeastern Europe: Perspectives from Greece and Germany’ Workshop. Humboldt University, Berlin.
- Aslanidis, Paris (2016) “Is populism an ideology? A refutation and a new perspective” *Political Studies* 64, 88-104.
- Auers, D. & Kasekamp, A. 2013. “Comparing radical-right populism in Estonia and Latvia”. Teoksessa R: Wodak, M. Khosravini & B. Mral (eds.) *Right-wing populism in Europe*. Bloomsbury, 235 - 248.
- Baker, M. (1995). “Corpora in translation studies. An overview and suggestions for future research”. *Target*, 7(2), 223–243.
- Baker, M. (1996). “Corpus-based translation studies. The challenges that lie ahead”. In H. Somers (Ed.), *Terminology, LSP and Translation* (pp. 175–186). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. London; New York: Continuum. Retrieved from <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=436216>
- Baker, P., & McEnery, T. (2015). *Corpora and Discourse Studies: Integrating Discourse and Corpora*.
- Bellè, E. & Poggio, B. 2018. “New faces of populism: the Italian 'anti-gender' mobilization”. In U. Kovala, E. Palonen, M. Ruotsalainen & T. Saresma (eds.) *Populism on the loose*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 119 - 142.
- Bernhard, L., Kriesi, H. and Weber, E. (2015) “The Populist Discourse of the Swiss People’s Party”, in H. Kriesi and T. S. Pappas (eds), *European populism in the shadow of the great recession*. Colchester: ECPR Press, 2015, pp. 125-139
- Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Reppen, R., (1998). *Corpus Linguistics. Investigating Language, Structure and Use*. Cambridge University Press.

- Bickerton, CJ. & Invernizzi Acetti, C. (2018). “Techno-populism” as a new party family: the case of the Five Star Movement and Podemos”. *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 10(2): 132-150.
- Block, E. & R. Negrine (2017). “The Populist Communication Style: Toward a Critical Framework”. *International Journal of Communication* 11(2017), 178–197
- Blumler, J. 2003. “Broadening and Deepening Comparative Research” pp. xv-xx., in G. Mazzoleni, G., J. Stewart and B. Horsfield (eds) *The Media and Neo-Populism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis*. Westport: Praeger.
- Bobba, G. & Legnante, G (2016). *Italy. A Breeding Ground for Populist Political Communication: Populist Political Communication in Europe*. Routledge.
- Bobba, G. (2021). “Digital populism. How the Web and social media are shaping populism in Western democracies”. In Heinisch, R., Mazzoleni O. (eds.) *Political Populism. Handbook of Concepts, Questions and Strategies of Research*. Nomos verlag.
- Boomgaarden, Hajo G., and Rens Vliegenthart. “Explaining the Rise of Anti-Immigrant Parties: The Role of News Media Content.” *Electoral Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2007, pp. 404–417., <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2006.10.018>.
- Borchers, Callum. 2021. “Yes, Donald Trump Has Been Good for the Media Business.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 25 Nov. 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/10/25/yes-donald-trump-has-been-good-for-the-media-business/> [last viewed on 31/01/2022].
- Bos, L. & Brants, K. 2014. “Populist rhetoric in politics and media: A longitudinal study of the Netherlands”. *European Journal of Communication* 29(6). 29. 10.1177/0267323114545709.
- Bos, L. & Brants, L. 2014. “Populist rhetoric in politics and media: A longitudinal study of the Netherlands”. *European Journal of Communication*, 29, 703 - 719.
- Bowman, P. (2007) “The disagreement is not one: The populisms of Laclau, Rancière and Arditì”. *Social Semiotics* 17:4, 540-545.

- Bracciale, R., and Martella, A. 2017. "Define the populist political communication style: the case of Italian political leaders on Twitter". *Information, Communication & Society*, 20, 1 - 20.
- Canovan, M. (1999) "Trust the People! The Two Faces of Democracy". *Political Studies* 47(1):2-16.
- Canovan, M., (2002), "Taking politics to the people: Populism as the ideology of democracy". In Mény, Y., Surel, Y., & Tame, C. (Eds.). *Democracies and the populist challenge* (pp. 25- 44). Houndmills: Palgrave.
- Chadwick, A. (2011). "The Political Information Cycle in a Hybrid News System: The British Prime Minister and the "Bullygate" Affair". *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 16(1), 3–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161210384730>
- Chadwick, A. (2013-09-03). *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chadwick, A., Vaccari, C. and Kaiser, J. 2021. 'The Amplification of Exaggerated and False News on Social Media: The Roles of Platform Use, Motivations, Affect, and Ideology.' *American Behavioral Scientist*, pp. 1–18.
- Couldry N. 2008. "Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling". *New Media & Society*. 10(3):373-391. doi:10.1177/1461444808089414
- Couldry, N. and Hepp, A. 2013. *Conceptualizing Mediatization: Contexts, Traditions, Arguments*. *Communication Theory*. 23. 10.1111/comt.12019.
- Dawes, N. 2016. "Maneuvering a New Reality for US Journalism." *Columbia Journalism Review*, November 22. [https://www.cjr.org/the\\_feature/trump\\_journalism\\_press\\_freedom\\_global.php](https://www.cjr.org/the_feature/trump_journalism_press_freedom_global.php)
- De Benoist, A. (2017). *Populismo. La Fine Della Destra E Della Sinistra*. Arianna Editrice.
- De Vreese CH, Esser F, Aalberg T, Reinemann C, & Stanyer J (2018) "Populism as an Expression of Political Communication Content and Style: A New Perspective". *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 23(4), 423-438.
- Deegan-Krause, K. and Haughton, T. (2009) "Toward a More Useful Conceptualization of Populism: Types and Degrees of Populist Appeals in the Case of Slovakia", *Politics and Policy*, 37 (4), 821–41.

- Denver, D. (2007). *Elections and Voting Behaviour in Britain*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dijck, J. & Poell, T. (2013). “Understanding social media logic”. *Media and Communication* 1:1,2 – 14.
- Eatwell, R. & Goodwin, M. (2018). *National Populism. The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy*. Penguin. Random House.
- Ernst, N., Engesser, S., Büchel, F., Blassnig, S., & Esser, F. (2017). „Extreme parties and populism: an analysis of Facebook and Twitter across six countries”. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20, 1347 - 1364.
- Espejo, P. O., Ostiguy, P., Kaltwasser Cristóbal Rovira, & Taggart, P. (2017). *The Oxford handbook of populism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Esser, F. and Strömbäck, J. 2014. Strömbäck, J., & Esser, F. (2014). “Mediatization of Politics: Transforming Democracies and Reshaping Politics”. In K. Lundby (Ed.), *Mediatization of Communication*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 375-403. 10.1515/9783110272215.375.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Discourse Analysis: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Feng, H. (2020). *Form, Meaning and Function in Collocation. A Corpus Study on Commercial Chinese-to-English Translation*. Taylor & Francis.
- Fieschi, C. (2004) “Introduction”. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9(3): 235-40.
- Finstad, M. & Isotalus, P. (2005). “Näkökulmia poliitikon viestintäosaamiseen”. *Prologi : puheviestinnän vuosikirja 2005*, 2005, 12-30.
- Fiske, J. 1992. “British Cultural Studies and Television”. In *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled*, edited by R. C. Allen.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Frazosi, P. Marone, F., and Salvati, E. (2015) “Populism and Euroscepticism in the Italian Five Star Movement”. *The International Spectator Italian Journal of International Affairs*, 50(2): 109-124.
- Fryklund, B. (2018). “Populism in the Nordic countries 1965–2015: The Swedish case as an ideal type or comparative yardstick for the development of populism”.

- Teoksessa U. Kovala, E. Palonen, M. Ruotsalainen & T. Saresma (eds.) *Populism on the loose*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 29 - 52.
- Gee, JP. (2015). "Discourse analysis of games". *Discourse and Digital Practices*. Routledge
- Gidron N, Bonikowski B. (2013). "Varieties of Populism: Literature Review and Research Agenda". In *Weatherhead Working Paper Series*, No. 13-0004 ; 2013.
- Giglietto, F., Iannelli, L., Valeriani, A., Rossi, L. (2019). "'Fake News' Is the Invention of a Liar: How False Information Circulates within the Hybrid News System." *Current Sociology*, vol. 67, no. 4, pp. 625–642., <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392119837536>.
- Goodwyn, L. (1976). *Democratic promise: the populist moment in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gramsci, A. (1982). *Vankilavihkot (Valikoima 2)*. Suom. Martti Berger, Mikael Böök & Leena Talvio. Helsinki: Kansankulttuuri.
- Granger, S. & Meunier, F., (2008). *Phraseology. An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Benjamins. Amsterdam/Philadelphia.
- Gries, S. (2008). *Phraseology and Linguistic Theory: A Brief Survey* in Sylvaine Granger and Fanny Meunier (eds), *Phraseology. An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 3-25.
- Gürnhali, H. (2018). "Populism on steroids: Erdoğanists and their enemies in Turkey". In U. Kovala, E. Palonen, M. Ruotsalainen & T. Saresma (eds.) *Populism on the loose*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto 53 - 80.
- Hafez, F. (2017). "Debating the 2015 Islam law in Austrian Parliament: Between legal recognition and Islamophobic populism." *Discourse & Society*, 284, 392 - 412.
- Hall, S. (1992). "Tatcherismi ja Teoreetikot". In Stuart Hall (1999) *Kulttuurin ja politiikan murroksia*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 322-354.
- Hallin, C. D. & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hariman, R. (1995). *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Hatakka, N. (2018). "Liittolaisia ja vastuksia: Neljä näkökulmaa populismin ja median suhteeseen". In Niemi and Houni (eds) *Media ja populismi. Työkaluja kriittiseen journalismiin*. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Hatakka, N. (2019). *Populism In the Hybrid Media System. Populist Radical Right Online Counterpublics interacting with Journalism, Party Politics, and Citizen Activism*. University of Turku.
- Hatakka, N., Niemi, M. K. & Välimäki, M. (2017). "Confrontational yet submissive: Calculated ambivalence and populist parties' strategies of responding to racism accusations in the media". *Discourse & Society* 28, 262 - 280.
- Hawkins, K. A. (2009). 'Is Chavez Populist? Measuring Populist Discourse in Comparative Perspective', *Comparative Political Studies*, 42 (8), 1040–67.
- Hawkins, K. A. (2010). *Venezuela's Chavismo and Populism in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hawkins, K. A., Riding, S. and Mudde, C. (2012). "Measuring Populist Attitudes. Political Concepts Committee on Concepts and Methods." *C&M Working Paper (#55)*. [www.concepts-methods.org](http://www.concepts-methods.org)
- Herkman, J. (2011). *Politiikka ja mediajulkisuus*. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Herkman, J. (2016). "Construction of Populism: meanings given to populism in the Nordic press". *Nordicom Review* 37 (Special Issue), p. 147-261
- Herkman, J. (2017). "Articulations of Populism: the Nordic Case". *Cultural Studies*, 31(4), 470-488. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2016.1232421>
- Herkman, J. (2019). *Populism Aika*. Vastapaino.
- Hoey, M. (2005). *Lexical Priming: A New Theory of Words and Language*, Stroud, UK: Taylor & Francis.
- Hunston, S. (2006). Corpus Linguistics. *Linguistics*, 7(2), 215–244.
- Ignazi P (2003) *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ilie, C. (2008). "Rhetoric and language". In W. Donsbach (Ed.). *The International encyclopedia of communication*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Ionescu, G., & Gellner, E. (1969). *Populism-its meaning and national characteristics*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Isotalus, P. 2017. *Mediapolitiikka*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

- Jacobs, K. & Spierings, N. (2019) "A populist paradise? Examining populists' Twitter adoption and use". *Information, Communication & Society*, 22:12, 1681-169
- Jagers, J. and Walgrave, S. (2007). "Populism as Political Communication Style: An Empirical Study of Political Parties' Discourse in Belgium", *European Journal of Political Research*, 46 (3), 319–45.
- Jantunen, JH. (2004). *Untypical patterns in translations*. In A. Mauranen and P. Kujamaki (eds.), *Translation universals: Do they Exist?*, 101-128. Benjamins. Amsterdam/Philadelphia.
- Jantunen, JH. (2018). "Suomi 24-keskustelu kohtaamisten ja tormaysten tilana" Online Discussion as a Contact Zone". *International Journal On Media Management*. 17 (4): 217-239.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture*. New York: NYU Press.
- Jensen, A. T., Fladmoe, A. (2012). "Ten Commandments for the Scandalization of Political Opponents". In Allern, S., Pollack, E. (eds), *Scandalous! The Mediated Construction of Political Scandals in Four Nordic Countries*. Göteborgs universitet: Nordicom.
- Kaltwasser, Cristóbal R., Paul A. Taggart, Paulina O. Espejo, and Pierre Ostiguy. (2017). *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kimball, R. (2017). *Vox Populi. The Perils & Promises of Populism*. Encounter Books. New York, New York.
- Kivikuru, U., Pietiläinen J. (2014). "Maaailman media". *Sosiaalitieteiden laitoksen julkaisuja*. 276 s.
- Klinger, U., & Svensson, J. (2015). "The emergence of network media logic in political communication: A theoretical approach". *New Media & Society*, 17(8), 1241–1257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814522952>
- Koivunem, A. (2011). "Det affektiva medborgarskapet". In Johan Fornäs & Anne Kaun (eds.) *Medialisering av kultur, politik, vardag och forskning*. Huddinge: Södertörns högskola p. 62-64
- Koopmans, R. Muis, J. (2009). "The Rise of Right-Wing Populist Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands: A Discursive Opportunity Approach." *European Journal of*



- Political Research*, vol. 48, no. 5, 2009, pp. 642–664.,  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2009.00846.x>.
- Kovala, U., and Palonen, E. (2018). “Populism on the loose: seminal prelections on the condition of differentiability”. In U. Kovala, E. Palonen, M. Ruotsalainen, & T. Saresma (Eds.), *Populism on the loose* (pp. 13-26). Jyväskylän yliopisto. Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja, 122.  
<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-7401-5>
- Krämer, B. (2014). “Media Populism: A Conceptual Clarification and Some Theses on its Effects”, *Communication Theory*, Volume 24, Issue 1, February 2014, Pages 42–60, <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12029>
- Krotz, F. (2007). “The Meta-Process of ‘Mediatization’ as a Conceptual Frame”. *Global Media and Communication*. 3. 256-260.  
 10.1177/17427665070030030103.
- Kunnas, T. (2014). *Fasismen Lumous: Eurooppalainen Älymystö Mussolinin ja Hitlerin politiikan tukijana*. Atena.
- Laclau, E. (2005). *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso.
- Laclau, E., Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a radical democratic politics*. Lontoo: Verso.
- Laclau, E. (1977). *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*. Lontoo: New Left Books.
- Hjarvard, S. (2013). *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*. London: Routledge.
- Laclau, E. (2007) [2005]. *On Populist Reason*. London and New York: Verso.
- Larson, C. (2013). *Persuasion: reception and responsibility*. Wadsworth Cengage
- Larsson A.O., Moe H. (2012). “Studying political microblogging: Twitter users in the 2010 Swedish election campaign”. *New Media & Society*. 14(5):729-747.
- Leech, G. (1992). “Corpora and Theories of Linguistic Performance”. In J. Svartvik (Ed.), *Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 82* (pp. 105–122). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 280
- Leech, G. (2004). Developing Linguistic Corpora: a Guide to Good Practice - Adding Linguistic Annotation”. Retrieved from  
<https://ota.ox.ac.uk/documents/creating/dlc/chapter2.htm>
- Leech, G. (1974). *Semantics: The Study of Meaning*. London: Pelican

- Lehto, A. (2018). Lexical Bundles in Early Modern and Present-day English Acts of Parliament. In J. Kopaczyk & J. Tyrkko (Eds.) *Applications of pattern-driven methods on corpus linguistics* (pp. 159-186). Benjamins. Amsterdam/Philadelphia
- Lilleker, D. G. (2006). *Key Concepts in Political Communication*. Sage.
- Luukka, M-R. (2000). "Nakokulma luo kohteen: Diskurssitutkimuksen taustaoletukset". – Sajavaara Kari & Arja Piirainen-Marsh (eds.) *Kieli, diskurssi ja yhteiso*, 133-160. University of Jyväskylä.
- MacRae, D. (1969). "Populism is an Ideology". In Ionescu, G., Gellner, E. (eds.) *Populism: Its Meanings and national Characteristics*, 197-211. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- March, L. (2007) "From Vanguard of the Proletariat to Vox Populi: Left-Populism as a "Shadow" of Contemporary Socialism". *SAIS Review* 27(1): 63-77.
- March, L. (2012) 'Towards an Understanding of Contemporary Left-Wing Populism'. Paper presented at the Political Studies Association (PSA) Annual International Conference, Belfast.
- Martin, J. 2014. *Politics and rhetoric: a critical introduction*. Routledge. Taylor & Francis Group. London and New York
- Mazzoleni G. (2014) *Mediatization and Political Populism*. In: Esser F., Strömbäck J. (eds) *Mediatization of Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137275844\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137275844_3)
- Mazzoleni, G. 2008. "Populism and the Media". In *Twenty-first-century populism: The spectre of Western European democracy*. By D, Albertazzi & D. McDonnell. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 49-64.
- Mazzoleni, G., Stewart, J. & Horsfield, B. 2003. *The media and neo-populism: A contemporary comparative analysis*. Westport (Conn.); London: Praeger.
- Mény, Y. & Surel, Y. (2002) "The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism". In *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, edited but Yves Mény and Yves Surel, 1-21. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mikhailov, M., & Cooper, R. (2016). *Corpus Linguistics for Translation and Contrastive Studies: a guide for research*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

- Moffit, B. (2016). *The Global Rise of Populism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Moffitt, B. and Tormey, S. 2014. "Rethinking Populism". *Polit Stud*, 62: 381-397.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12032>
- Molina, M. D., Sundar, S. S., Le, T., & Lee, D. (2021). "Fake News" Is Not Simply False Information: A Concept Explication and Taxonomy of Online Content. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 65(2), 180-212.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219878224>
- Mouffe, Chantal (2018) *For a left populism*. London: Verso.
- Mudde, C. & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (eds.) 2012. *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or corrective for democracy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mudde, C. (2004). "The Populist Zeitgeist". *Government and opposition* 39(4): 545-63.
- Mudde, C., (2017). "Populism: An Ideational Approach". in Espejo, P. O., Ostiguy, P., Kaltwasser Cristóbal Rovira, & Taggart, P. (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of populism* (27-47). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mudde, Cas. (2019). *The Far Right Today*. Polity Press. The United Kingdom.
- Niemi and Houni (eds.) (2018). *Media ja populismi. Työkaluja kriittiseen journalismiin*. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Oliver, J. E. & Rahn, W. M. (2016). Rise of the Trumpenvolk: Populism in the 2016 Election. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667, 189 - 206.
- Ostiguy, P., (2017). "Populism: A Socio-Cultural Approach". In Espejo, P. O., Ostiguy, P., Kaltwasser Cristóbal Rovira, & Taggart, P. (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of populism* (73- 100). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Palonen, E. (2017). "Perussuomalaiset Helsingin Sanomien peilissä." In E. Palonen, Saresma T. (eds.) *Jätkät & jytkyt: Perussuomalaiset ja populismin retoriikka*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 71 - 108.
- Palonen, E. (2020). "Ten Theses on Populism – and Democracy". In E, Eklund, Knott, A., *The Populist Manifesto*. Pp. 55-70. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Palonen, E. (2021). "Finland: Political Developments and Data in 2020". *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook*, 60: 132-140.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-8852.12344>
- Palonen, E., Saresma, T. (2017). "Perussuomalaiset ja populistinen retoriikka". In E. Palonen, and. Saresma, T. (eds.) *Jätkät & jytkyt: Perussuomalaiset ja populismin retoriikka*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 13 - 44.
- Palonen, E. (1997). *Kootut retoriikat*. Jyväskylän yliopiston paino.
- Pappas, T. S. (ed.) (2015). *European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession*. Colchester: ECPR Press, pp. 91–108.
- Pappas, T. S. (2016). "Distinguishing Liberal Democracy's Challengers". *Journal of Democracy*, 27, 22 - 36.
- Parry-Giles, S. J., Samek, A. A. (2008). "Rhetoric and politics". In Teoksessa W. Donsbach (ed.), *The international encyclopedia of communication*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Partington, A. (2004). "Utterly content in each other's company: Semantic prosody and semantic preference". *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 9(1), pp. 131–156.
- Partington, A. (1998). "'Unusuality' and rhetorical effect: A machine-assisted investigation of the language of newspaper headlines" in *Meta*, XIII, 3.
- Partington, A. (2014). "Evaluative Prosody" in Aijmer, K. and Ruhleman, C. (eds) *Corpus Pragmatics: A Handbook*, Cambridge University Press: 279-303
- Partington, A., Duguid, A., & Taylor, C. (2013). *Patterns and Meanings in Discourse: Theory and practice in corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS)* (Vol. 55). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.55>
- Pauwels, T. and Rooduijn, M. (2015). "Populism in Belgium in Times of Crisis: A Longitudinal Study". In Kriesi, H., Pappas, T. (eds.) *European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession*. Colchester: ECPR Press, pp. 91–108.
- Pels, D. & Te Velde, H. (2000). *Politieke Stijl. Over presentatie en optreden in de politiek*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

- Pels, D. (2003). "Aesthetic Representation and Political Style: Re-balancing Identity and Difference in Media Democracy". In J. Corner and Pels, D.(eds.) *Media and the Restyling of Politics*. Pp. 41-66. London: SAGE.
- Pietikäinen, S. & Mäntynen, A. (2019). *Uusi kurssi kohti diskurssia*. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Railo, E., Välimäki, M. (2012). "Kamppailujulkisuus denhallinnasta". In V. Perna & E. Railo (Eds.) *Jytky. Eduskuntavaalien 2011 mediajulkisuus*. (pp.100–161). Turku: Turun yliopisto/Kirja-Aurora.
- Rooduijn M., de Lange S., Van der Brug W. 2012. *A populist Zeitgeist? Programmatic contagion by populist parties in Western Europe*, in *Party Politics*, Volume 20, Sage Publications, 2012.
- Rooduijn, M. (2018). State of the field: How to study populism and adjacent topics? A plea for both more and less focus. *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(1), 362–372. doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12314
- Rooduijn, M. (2014). "The Nucleus of Populism. In Search of the Lowest Common Denominator". *Government and Opposition* 49(4): 573-599.
- Rosanvallon, P. (2008). *Vastademokratia: Poliittika epäluulon aikakaudella*. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Rousseau, J.-J., Dunn, S., May, G. (2002). *The social contract; and the first and second discourses*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ruotsalainen, T., Saresma (eds.) *Populism on the loose*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto 13 - 26.
- Sakki, I., Pettersson, K. (2016). "Discursive construction of otherness in populist radical right political blogs". *European Journal of Psychology* 46, 156-170.
- Schäffner, C., Bassnett, S. (eds.). (2010). *Political discourse, media and translation*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D., Hamilton, H. E. (eds.). (2001). *The handbook of discourse analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Sinclair, J. (1991). *Corpus Concordance Collocation*. Oxford: OUP
- Singh, P. (2021). "Populism, Nationalism, and Nationalist Populism". *St Comp Int Dev* 56, 250–269. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-021-09337-6>

- Sintes-Olivella M., Franch P, Yeste-Piquer E, Zilles K. (2022) “Europe Abhors Donald Trump: The Opinion on the 2020 U.S. Presidential Elections and Their Candidates in the European Newspapers”. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 66(1):61-85. doi:10.1177/00027642211005534
- Sparks, C. (2000). *Tabloid Tales: Global Debates Over Media Standards*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Stanley, B. (2008). “The thin ideology of populism”. *Journal of Political Ideologies*. 13, 95 - 110.
- Stavrakakis, Y., Katsambekis, G. (2014). “Left-wing populism in the European periphery: the case of SYRIZA”. *Journal of Political Ideologies*. 19, 119 - 142.
- Stewart, J., Horsfield B., Mazzoleni, G. (2003). “The Media and the Growth of Neo-Populism in Contemporary Democracies”. In Stewart, J., Horsfield B., Mazzoleni, G. (eds) *The Media and Neo-Populism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis*. Westport: Praeger. 1-20.
- Stromback, G., Orsten, M. and Aalberg, T. (2008). *Communicating Politics: Political Communication in the Nordic Countries*. Eds. Jesper. Sweden: Nordicom.
- Stubbs, M. (2001). *Words and phrases: corpus studies of lexical semantics*. Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. McEnery, T., & Wilson, A. (2011). *Corpus linguistics: an introduction* (2. ed., repr). Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press.
- Taggart, P. (2000). *Populism*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Taguieff, P. (1995) “Political Science Confronts Populism: From a Conceptual Mirage to a Real Problem”. *Telos* 103: 9-43.
- Taguieff, P. (2015) *La revanche du nationalism. Néopopulistes et xenophobes à l’assaut de l’Europe*. Presses Universitaires de France.
- Terrill, R. E. (2015). *Double-Consciousness and the Rhetoric of Barack Obama : The Price and Promise of Citizenship*. University of South Carolina Press.
- Traverso, Enzo (2019). *The New Faces of Fascism. Populism and the Far Right*. Verso.
- Trent, J. S. Friedenberg, R. V., Denton, R. E. (2011). *Political Campaign Communication Principles and Practices*. 7th edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC

- Turner, J. C. & Hogg, M. A. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Učeň, P. (2010). "Approaching National Populism". In P. Kálmán (ed.) *National Populism and Slovak-Hungarian Relations in Slovakia 2006-2009*. Pp. 13-38. Šamorín-Somorja: Forum Minority Research Institute.
- Vaarakallio, T. (2018). "The concept of populism in the Finnish newspaper Helsingin sanomat". In Teoksessa U., Kovala, Palonen, E., Ruotsalainen M., Saresma, T., (eds.) *Populism on the loose*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 203 - 211.
- Vaarakallio, Tuula. (2017). "Perussuomalaisen kaksoispuhe". Teoksessa E. Palonen, T. Saresma (eds.) *Jätkät & Jytkyt. Perussuomalaiset ja populismin retoriikka*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 199–217.
- Vaccari, C., Valeriani, A. (2016). "Party Campaigners or Citizen Campaigners? How Social Media Deepen and Broaden Party-Related Engagement". *THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PRESS/POLITICS* 21, pp. 294 - 312
- Vainikkala, E. (2020). "Populismien väkevytymisen – populistisesta retoriikasta ideologiseen fantasiaan". *Politiikka* 62:2, s. 107–124, 2020
- Vasilopoulou, S., Halikiopoulou, D. and Exadaktylos, T. (2014). "Greece in Crisis: Austerity, Populism and the Politics of Blame". *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52 (2), 388–402.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Hanitzsch, T. (eds.) (2009). *The handbook of journalism studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Walgrave, S., De Swert, K., (2004). "The Making of the (Issues of the) Vlaams Blok". *Political Communication*, 21:4, 479-500, DOI: 10.1080/10584600490522743
- Walicky, A., (1969). "Russia". In Ionescu and Gellner (Eds.), *Populism-its meaning and national characteristics* (pp.62-96). London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Weyland, K., (2017). "Populism: A Political – Strategic Approach". In Espejo, P. O., Ostiguy, P., Kaltwasser Cristóbal Rovira, and Taggart, P. (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of populism* (48- 72). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wiberg, M. (2011). "Mitä populismi on?". In Teoksessa M. Wiberg (ed.) *Populismi: Kriittinen arvio*. Helsinki: Edita, 11 - 21.

- Wiesner, C. Haapala, T. And Palonen, E. (2017). "Debates". In Wiesbaden, V. S. (ed.) *Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften Rhetoric and Political Action: Practices of Textual Interpretation and Analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Wirth, W., Esser, F. (2016). "The appeal of populist ideas, strategies and styles: A theoretical model and research design for analyzing populist political communication". National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR). *Challenges to Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Working paper No. 88*.
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. SAGE.
- Worsley, P. (1969). "The Concept of Populism", in G. Ionescu, E. Gellner (eds.) *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Zappettini, F. Maccaferri, M. (2021). "Euroskepticism between Populism and Technocracy: The Case of Italian Lega and Movimento 5 Stelle". In *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 17 (2): 239-257.
- Zappavigna, M. (2015). *Discourse of Twitter and social media: how we use language to create affiliation on the web*. London New Dehli New York Sydney: Bloomsbury.